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Students' views of classroom management strategies in assertive discipline and constructivist classroom settings

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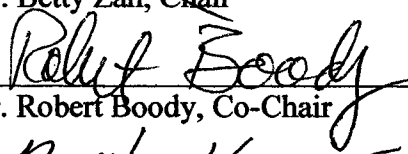
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STUDENTS' VIEWS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
STRATEGIES IN ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE AND
CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOM SETTINGS

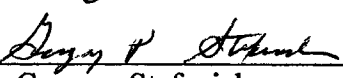
A Dissertation
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Approved:


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December 2004

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**STUDENTS' VIEWS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
STRATEGIES IN ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE AND
CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOM SETTINGS**

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment


Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betty Zan", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Betty Zan, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan J. Koch", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Susan J. Koch

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December 2004

ABSTRACT

The present case study was designed to investigate third grade students' views of their teachers' behavior management strategies in two contrasting classroom types at the third grade level: an Assertive Discipline classroom that represents the behaviorist paradigm, and a constructivist classroom that emphasizes the social cognitive paradigm. Understanding students' views at this age is important because these views become the lenses through which children interpret subsequent school experiences and may provide insight into how to reduce student misbehavior in schools (Valeski & Stipek, 2001). However, limited research exists to compare third grade students' views in classrooms of teachers with different theoretical perspectives on classroom management (Tulley & Chiu, 1995; Weinstein, 1983).

Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

1. How do third grade students' view their teachers' classroom management strategies within an Assertive Discipline classroom?
2. How do third grade students' view their teachers' classroom management strategies within a constructivist classroom?
3. How do third grade students' views of their teachers' classroom management strategies within an Assertive Discipline classroom compare to third grade students' views within a constructivist classroom?
4. How does a third grade teacher view her classroom management strategies within an Assertive Discipline classroom?
5. How does a third grade teacher view his classroom management strategies within a constructivist classroom?

Data was collected using three methods: (a) two instruments to ensure appropriate classroom selection for the study, (b) videotaping to support the classroom instruments, record classroom management methods and approaches, and observe teacher and students' behaviors when rules were disobeyed, and (c) in-depth interviews with each classroom teacher and each third grade student. A total of two teachers and twenty-four students were interviewed. The classroom teachers included in the study were interviewed to examine their theoretical beliefs about behavior management. The students included in the study were interviewed to examine their views of their teachers' behaviors when classroom rules were disobeyed.

Analysis of the data from student interviews was conducted to identify themes that describe students' views of teachers' behaviors and behavior management strategies within the classroom and to connect the data to the study's major research questions and statements of purpose.

DEDICATION

To

Dr. Martin James Swenson

My Father

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Teachers create different classroom environments based on different philosophies about their students' development of self-control and different beliefs about reducing student misbehavior in schools. The distinct classroom management approaches most influential in shaping teaching practices in schools today are behaviorism and constructivism (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Burk & Dunn, 1996; DeVries, 1997; Phillips & Soltis, 1998).

Behaviorism seeks to explain human behavior in terms of observable and measurable responses to environmental stimuli. Behaviorist psychologists such as John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner introduced behaviorist concepts that have shaped classroom management techniques popular today. Watson believed that behavior is a physiological reaction to environmental stimuli and that human behavior could be controlled and predicted by using stimulus-response (S-R) conditioning (Green, n.d.; Watson, 1959). B.F. Skinner believed that rewarding behavior with verbal praise, a good grade, tangible rewards, or a feeling of increased accomplishment reinforces that behavior, making it more likely to be repeated, and that withdrawing a reward, which is a form of punishment, will diminish a person's response to a given behavior and may result in the extinction of the behavior (Sanchez, 2003; Skinner, 1971).

According to Woolley, Woolley, and Hosey's (1999) research on teacher beliefs and practices in elementary classrooms, the behaviorist theory is instrumental in the design of many basal textbooks and standardized tests that continue to influence what teachers do

in many schools. This theory also undergirds many behavior management strategies, such as authoritarian classroom structures (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1996; VanTassell, 2003) that exercise control through means of rewards, punishments, and praise (Canter & Canter, 1976, 2001; Mangin, 1998).

In contrast, constructivism seeks to explain human behavior as a complex and dynamic process of adaptation (Piaget, 1932/1965/1997). The constructivist theory was influenced by Socrates' conversations with his students, in which he asked directed questions that led his students to realize for themselves that their thoughts were incomplete. Socrates encouraged them to reinterpret and elaborate on their thoughts (Thirteen Online, n.d.). In this century, Jean Piaget and John Dewey developed theories of child development and education that led to the growth of constructivism, also known as the social cognitive paradigm. Piaget (1932/1965/1997) believed that children learn through the construction of logical structures and that meaning is constructed as children interact in meaningful ways with the world around them through active exploration and adaptation. Dewey (1916/1966) believed that education should be grounded in real experiences and sustained inquiry, and learning grounded in evidence.

Since the 1980's and 1990's, the constructivist theory has influenced many teacher education courses, programs, and classrooms as a means of reforming traditional behaviorist classrooms, especially in math, science, literacy (Kamii, 1994; Woolley et al., 1999), and technology education (Brown, 1996). Classroom management strategies such as character building (Glasser, 1990a), classroom democracy (DeVries & Zan, 1994),

conflict resolution and classroom meetings (Charles, 2000; DeVries & Zan, 1994), and individualized curriculum (Zahorik, 1995) are characteristic of these reforms.

Research reviewed in Chapter 2 suggests that although these two theories are clearly different in their approaches to management of students' behavior, it remains unclear how these theories influence students' views of their own experiences in the classroom (Woolley et al., 1999), including their views of typical classroom norms, consequences for inappropriate behaviors, strategies that enable them to show self-control, teacher behaviors, and the learning environment itself. In the study to be described here, student views are defined as students' thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and perceptions (Combs & Syngg, 1959) about their classroom experiences, which are influenced by needs, values, physiological conditions, threats, situational factors, and concepts of self and other people (Good, 1992; Wilson, 1978).

A series of studies by Tulley and Chiu (1995, 1998) and Chiu and Tulley (1997) indicated that students in grade six had a realistic understanding of behaviors teachers expected of them and the various consequences teachers used to deal with inappropriate behavior. These students were able to describe various discipline strategies their teachers used such as removal punishment, explanation, threats and warnings, and ignoring the behavior (taking no action). It is important to understand students' views because they may provide information about the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of those strategies. However, Weinstein (1983) and Tulley and Chiu (1995) found that limited research exists to compare students' views of teachers with different theoretical perspectives on classroom management.

In 1987, Weinstein, Marshall, Sharp, and Botkin studied first, third, and fifth grade students' views of teachers' behaviors in two types of classrooms (open and traditional). They concluded that students' views should be better understood because teachers' strategies in each classroom may influence classroom environment, students' self-image and motivations, and academic performance. Weinstein et al. stated that students are active interpreters of classroom reality and draw inferences about the causes and effects of behavior. However, such inferences are not always rational, and students' views and adults' views of classroom reality may not necessarily agree.

Daniels, Kalkman, and McCombs (2001) compared 66 kindergarten through second grade students' views of learning in a learner-centered classroom and a non-learner-centered classroom. The authors found that students' views of how learning occurs in the learner-centered classroom tend to be consistent with their teachers' instructional practices in their classrooms; however, students' views of how learning occurs in a non-learner-centered classroom are inconsistent with teachers' instructional practices. Investigations of students' understanding of classroom phenomena can contribute valuable information about the role of classroom context in influencing students' thinking about their behavior.

Problem

Woolley et al. (1999) echoed Weinstein et al.'s. (1987) conclusion. They stated that a systematic method of assessment should be developed to understand students' views within behaviorist and constructivist classroom environments in order to better compare the two theories. Daniels et al. (2001) also concluded that it is important to find out how

children think about classroom management practices. By doing so, valuable information can be provided to show how a classroom is set up, how children learn best, how they interact with each other and the teacher, and how they develop self-control over their own behavior.

Purpose of the Study

In an attempt to address these issues, the present study was designed to investigate third grade students' views of their teachers' behavior management strategies in two contrasting classroom types: an Assertive Discipline classroom that represents the behaviorist paradigm, and a constructivist classroom that represents the social cognitive paradigm. For the purposes of the study, the classroom types were defined as follows.

The main goal of Assertive Discipline is to save instructional time for basic skills (Canter & Canter, 2002). One of the basic assumptions of Assertive Discipline is that most students are good and that students choose to behave or misbehave. Assertive Discipline is a behavior management approach used in classrooms to gain students' cooperation by using a series of rewards and punishments (Canter & Canter, 1976, 2002). The Assertive Discipline teacher sets firm limits that are fair and consistent and provides a great deal of positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior. These reinforcers include rewarding students with stickers, treats, prizes, extra recess, etc. Examples of punishments are writing students' names on the board when they display inappropriate behavior, taking away recess or an assembly, calling parents, and sending students to the principal (Canter, 1988; Canter & Canter, 1983, 1992; Covalieskie, 2001).

The main goal of constructivism is the development of moral and intellectual self-regulation (DeVries & Zan, 1994). A constructivist classroom is one that promotes respect for all members of the classroom and encourages students to engage in inquiry and understand others' perspectives about academic, social, and moral issues. This classroom environment is intended to promote sociomoral and intellectual development (DeVries, 1997). It is based on a theory that explains learning as a complex, non-linear process of making personal meaning (Kamii, 1982). It is developed through constant adaptation of schemas that are constructed through students' experiences (Piaget, 1932/1965/1997). The constructivist teacher manages behavior by establishing clear limits and providing opportunities for students to cooperate and to be responsible for their own behavior. Teacher strategies include eliciting student input, implementing conflict resolution, and holding classroom meetings (DeVries & Zan, 1994).

Statement of Need

Lack of discipline is widely perceived as the most important problem in education (Gallup, 1985; Gallup & Gallup, 2000; Palardy, 1996), and behavior management continues to be a major concern of educators (Cotton, 1990, 2002). Behavior management imposed and monitored by the teacher is seen by many as an effective way to maintain order and manage undesirable classroom behaviors and has traditionally been used to remedy behavior problems. While many classroom management approaches seem justified (Gartrell, 1997), no one program appears to be the answer to school discipline issues. However, many approaches include strategies that have been both validated as effective and indicated to be ineffective (Cotton, 2002).

According to Allen (1986) and Allen (1996), understanding students' views of classroom management provides insight into both how students assign meanings to their behaviors and the influence of various classroom management methods and approaches on their behaviors. Allen (1986) stated, "without an understanding of students' perspectives on classroom management, negative encounters between students and teachers will continue to lead to ineffective classroom management, negative learning, and ineffective teaching experiences" (p. 437). Studies by Weinstein, Marshall, Brattesani, and Middlestadt (1982), Weinstein et al. (1987), Tulley and Chiu (1998), Valeski and Stipek (2001), Woolley et al. (1999), Daniels et al. (2001), and Burnett (2002) indicated the necessity of exploring children's views of classroom management and classroom environments in which these views are developing. Children are able to share a great deal about their experiences in school. However, teachers rarely ask them to do so, resulting in a gap in fully understanding the child's motivation to learn about reasons for their behavior (Daniels et al., 2001).

According to Glasser (1990a) and Ikram and Bratlien (1994), many teachers lack the ability to effectively administer the strategies needed to help students become internally motivated to learn how to behave appropriately within the context of the classroom. This inability limits opportunities for students to develop listening, communicating, and problem-solving skills. Research suggests that the level of attainment of these skills is determined by classroom constraints that may contribute to either stagnation of growth or support for a continuing flow of opportunities for students to develop feelings of self-

efficacy and exercise self-control (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Bandura & Wood, 1989; McDaniel, 1987).

Daniels et al. (2001) and Covaleskie (1994) stated that it is imperative that educators learn from students' views of behaviors and classroom management strategies. By carefully assessing and attending to students' views when they are at early ages, and by identifying what students view as motivating them to behave in appropriate ways and not to behave in inappropriate ways, teachers may avert a trend toward increasingly inappropriate behavior.

Significance of the Study

This study does not attempt to solve the debate about which approach is superior, Assertive Discipline or constructivism. Rather, the purpose of the study is to understand students' thinking about their teachers' classroom management strategies. It is anticipated that this study will:

1. suggest a more thorough understanding of how students view Assertive Discipline and constructivist approaches of classroom management;
2. reveal environmental factors that influence students' awareness of classroom management strategies;
3. point out inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs about particular classroom management strategies and students' views on those strategies;
4. inspire reflection on the importance of students' views of classroom management strategies and how students assign meanings to their behaviors;
5. suggest factors students view as having an effect on their self-control;

6. provide insight into how to reduce student misbehavior in schools.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do third grade students view their teachers' classroom management strategies within an Assertive Discipline classroom?
2. How do third grade students view their teacher's classroom management strategies within a constructivist classroom?
3. How do third grade students' views of their teachers' classroom management strategies within an Assertive Discipline classroom compare to third grade students' views within a constructivist classroom?
4. How does a third grade teacher view her classroom management strategies within an Assertive Discipline classroom?
5. How does a third grade teacher view his classroom management strategies within a constructivist classroom?

Delimitations

The following decisions were made in order to define the boundaries of the research:

1. This study is not a longitudinal study; therefore it will not show how students' views change throughout the course of a year or longer.
2. This study does not examine home-life variables or where students come from, factors that may contribute to students' views within the classroom.
3. This study does not examine teacher or student gender variables, factors that may contribute to students' views within the classroom.

4. This study cannot determine whether teachers' behavior the rest of the year is consistent with what is observed during the research.

5. This study is limited to observing one behaviorist classroom using the Assertive Discipline Approach where teachers describe and evaluate observable behavior through reward and punishment as defined by Canter and Canter (1983, 1992). The classroom is highly structured, direct teaching is dominant (Nicholls & Houghton, 1995; Phillips & Soltis, 1998), and socialization emphasizes students learning their roles and understanding the importance of academic learning (Allen, 1986).

6. This study is limited to observing one constructivist classroom as defined by DeVries (1997), DeVries and Zan, (1994); DeVries, Haney, and Zan, (1991); DeVries, Reese-Learned, and Morgan (1991), and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (1992) as one that promotes sociomoral and intellectual development, encourages students to value discovery, invention, and differences of ideas (DeVries, 1997), explains learning as a process of construction from within the individual (Kamii, 1982), and promotes respect for all members of the classroom (DeVries & Zan, 1994).

7. This study is further limited to third grade students, who are usually between eight and ten years of age. Third grade students tend to view authority figures as omniscient and omnipotent (Piaget, 1932/1965/1997), have strong emotions, seek a lot of attention, handle transitions well, like being part of a group, and may be boisterous and impatient (Keith, 2003).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the study by describing the problem, stating the study's purpose and significance, and identifying the research questions and the delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the review of related literature, which is divided into three sections: section one, factors that are affected by students' views and factors that affect students' views; section two, teachers' practices for classroom management within an Assertive Discipline classroom; and section three, teachers' practices for classroom management within a constructivist classroom. This literature will establish the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study and for the construction of the interview questions.

Chapter 3 describes the qualitative procedures that will be used in gathering and analyzing data in the study.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the coded data from the interviews with students and discusses some implications of the findings.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the coded data from the interviews with teachers and discusses some implications of the findings.

Chapter 6 explores the major themes that emerged from the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and their implications for research and practice. Chapter 6 also provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Student behavior problems are complex and have a multiplicity of causes. One such cause is the lack of discipline in schools, which gravely impacts the school environment, student academic performance (Daniels et al., 2001; Weinstein, et al., 1987), self-concept and coping skills (Fox, Luiszki, & Schumuck, 1966), and relationships between teachers and students (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985). Lack of discipline creates disorder and potential danger arising from these behavior problems. Cotton (2002) noted that educators are using ineffective discipline strategies for controlling inappropriate behaviors, such as ignoring misconduct, using excessive or corporal punishment, and using vague or unenforceable rules. In response to these strategies, students may display inappropriate behaviors such as cheating, insubordination, truancy, intimidation, disrespect, assaults, and fighting. As a result, the flow of classroom activities and learning is disrupted (Sugai & Horner, 2001).

With the concerns being voiced today about student behavior, understanding student views about teachers' management strategies and behaviors should be given serious consideration as a means of learning how to reduce student misbehavior in schools. Several studies have examined student views about academics and learning (Daniels et al., 2001; Lashway, 2003); coping skills and self-esteem (Allen, 1986; Fox, et al., 1966; Weinstein, et al., 1982); teaching practices and teacher-student relationships (Chiu & Tulley, 1997; Daniels et al., 2001; Tulley & Chiu, 1995; Weinstein et al., 1983); and types of classrooms (Allen, 1986; Chiu & Tulley, 1997; DeVries, Reese-Learned, et al., 1991; Tulley

& Chiu, 1995; Woolfolk and Brooks, 1985). Woolfolk and Brooks's (1985) review article and Good's (1992) book discussed the importance of understanding student views about teachers' management strategies, behaviors, and classroom environment. However, in spite of the availability of these studies, article and book, most of the research is concerned with teachers' views and has been conducted almost exclusively at the university and secondary school levels (Allen, 1986; Cothran, Kulinna, & Garrahy, 2001; Tulley & Chiu, 1995).

For example, empirical research at the university level stresses student views about performance standards and self-regulation (Bandura & Wood, 1989); teachers' verbal and nonverbal behavior (Freitas, Myers, & Avtgis, 1998); instructional quality (Jackson, Teal, Raines, Nanse, Forsce, & Burdsal, 1999); instructor humor (Wanzer & Frymier, 1999); and teaching effectiveness (Jackson et al., 1999).

At the secondary school level, empirical research on student views has addressed school types; gender and learning styles (Tock, 1995); discipline strategies (Tulley & Chiu, 1998); teaching approaches and school types (Campbell, et al., 2001); and teacher behavior, classroom management, goals, and strategies (Allen, 1986; Fox, Peck, Blattstein, & Blattstein, 2001).

Because the purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive background from which to view third grade students' views about teachers' classroom management strategies, studies focusing on teachers' views, as well as studies conducted at the university and secondary levels, have been omitted except for those mentioned in the first section of this literature review. Because so little research is available to describe

factors that are influenced by, and factors that affect student views, the literature review in these two sections includes research conducted at many grade levels. A careful assessment of research most closely related to the purpose of this study has been conducted. This research includes studies related to students' understanding of their classroom experiences. Remarkably, limited research exists, with the exception of studies dealing with students' views and their perceptual adequacy at the third grade level.

In order to provide further background and insight into the purpose of this study, the following literature review is divided into three sections: section one discusses student views, factors that are affected by student views, and factors that affect student views. The second section reviews research on the Assertive Discipline management plan; the third section focuses on the constructivist management plan.

Student Views

Student views are defined as students' thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and perceptions (Combs & Syngg, 1959) about their classroom experiences, which are influenced by needs, values, physiological conditions, threats, situational factors, and concepts of self and other people (Good, 1992; Wilson, 1978). Rohrkemper (1984) stated that understanding elementary students' social views in the classroom provides valuable information about how they process and interpret their interactions with their teachers and classmates and within themselves.

Studies of student views at the elementary level have focused on differential teacher treatment in open and traditional classrooms (Weinstein et al., 1982); classroom and age differences in students' awareness of teacher expectations and in the relationship between

awareness and self-expectations (Weinstein et al., 1987); teacher performance (Weber, Manatt, & People and Education, 1993); teacher practices in learner-centered and non-learner centered classrooms (Daniels et al., 2001); students' feelings of academic competence and general feelings about school (Valeski & Stipek, 2001); and classroom environment (Burnett, 2002).

In 1987, Weinstein et al. examined age and classroom differences in children's awareness of their teachers' expectations and found that children as young as 6 years of age differ in their ability to process social information, may differ in forming stable views, and differ in their ability to apply such information to themselves. In their sample of 579 children, the authors also found that between the ages of 7 and 10, children may become more accurate in reading teacher cues about expected performance and show more congruence between their own expectations and the expectations of the teacher. Weinstein et al. contended that "because of the age-related differences, it becomes critical to examine these student beliefs at different grade levels and to ask about the nature of age-related changes that might influence children's susceptibility to teacher expectancy effects" (p. 1080). In other words, developmental age influences children's beliefs about and susceptibility to teacher expectations.

Evidence shows that students between the ages of 8 and 10 (typically third grade) are able to utilize social comparison information consistently in making evaluations about the causes and effects of actions and intentions (Rohrkemper, 1984). They are more observant and able to describe more abstract qualities of people and their environment (Weinstein et al., 1987) than younger children, and they begin to understand the basic concepts

of causality, reversibility (two-way thinking), and logic (Van Scoy, 1994). Most important to this study, they view differential treatment as negative feedback and a reliable guide to understanding the feelings of teachers (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985). According to Valeski and Stipek (2001), understanding students' views at this age is important because these views become the lenses through which children interpret subsequent school experiences.

The next two areas of review are devoted to research on factors that are affected by students' views and identification of factors that affect student views. Particular emphasis is given to factors that lead students to self-regulation and self-efficacy and factors that lend some predictability to children's development of self-efficacy and self-regulation. This background is especially necessary because student views reveal how they feel about their success, their relationships with peers and teacher, and their reactions to situations. Student views about their teachers and classroom environment determine whether students possess positive or negative senses of self-efficacy and strongly influence their views about their capacity for self-control.

Factors that are Affected by Students' Views

According to Carlson and Goldman's (1991) and Bandura and Cervone's (1983) research, the two major factors that are affected by students' views are self-efficacy and self-regulation. These factors are the best predictors of how students will perform cognitive tasks, self-evaluate reactions to their performance, and exercise levels of motivation needed to accomplish goals. Therefore, this section will provide an overview of research

on self-efficacy and self-regulation. Research on students' views in different classroom settings is included in the discussion of these factors.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175), as well as their beliefs in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over task demands (Bandura, 1990). Bandura and Cervone (1983) and Bandura (1995) stated that self-efficacy and cognitive ability develop from how one thinks, feels, and acts based on responses received from the environment. These responses lead to beliefs about oneself as capable or incapable of meeting particular challenges or performing actions within a given context. Research shows that self-efficacy is a predictor of how students view their success, relationships, and reactions to situations. Student views about their teachers determine whether students possess positive or negative senses of self, and may determine how students perceive what behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate.

Bandura and Cervone (1983) and Bandura and Jourden (1991) claimed that self-efficacy, coupled with one’s cognitive ability, is the basis for how one views his or her success in comparison to the surrounding world. Noddings and Shore (1984) and Rorh Kemper (1984) stated that it is considered a critical power that helps one understand one’s world and is necessary in providing adequate interpretations of classroom interactions.

Maddux’s (1995) chapter review compared social cognitive theory to self-efficacy theory, suggesting that social cognitive theory attempts to understand human action, mo-

tivations, and emotion in terms of cognition. Self-efficacy theory assumes that adults and students are capable of self-reflection and self-regulation. Because of this capability, they are able to shape their environment, determine whether they possess positive or negative senses of self-efficacy, and perceive what behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate. Maddux claimed that

people are capable of the anticipatory visualization of possible situations and events, their own behavioral and emotional reactions to these situations and events, and the possible consequences of their behavior. People generate beliefs about personal efficacy or inefficacy by imagining themselves or others behaving effectively or ineffectively in future situations. (p. 10-11)

Lorsbach and Jinks's (1999) review of self-efficacy theory and learning environment concluded that students' beliefs about the learning environment influence their self-efficacy. For example, cause and effect relationships are based upon students' experiences and their ability to cope with situation-specific constructs, such as how one acts in specific situations, what ought to happen or what could happen given their roles in the classroom, and why others act in particular ways. The authors claimed that self-efficacy depends on the nature of personal relationships in three ways: (a) in the comparison of personal knowledge and skills to that of other students, (b) the teacher's use of social-comparative appraisals of students' ability and growth, and (c) the level of performance teachers expect from their students. Lorsbach and Jinks asserted that

self-efficacy is rooted in the social system in which one acts and is dependent upon components of the classroom environment that are determined by how such things as goals, incentives, and expectations are created and maintained. Thus, the effects of self-efficacy on one's beliefs can determine if learning environments are perceived positively or negatively. (p. 4)

Students high in self-efficacy are more likely to learn regardless of the environment (Lorsbach and Jinks, 1999), to regulate their behavior based on personal goals (Bandura & Cervone, 1983), to approach situations more assuredly, to make better use of the skills they have, and to feel less need to invest much preparatory effort (Bandura, 1986).

Students low in self-efficacy are more likely to learn in an environment that is structured and provides opportunities for learning in small, sequential steps (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999). These students have difficulty establishing goals for themselves (Bandura & Cervone, 1983), are uncertain of their capabilities, and lack the motivation and coping skills that would enable them to succeed (Bandura, 1986).

Lorsbach and Jinks (1999) stated that teachers would benefit from understanding students' views of the learning environment because this knowledge would help inform them about how best to create opportunities for their students to construct high self-efficacy. Creating these environmental opportunities can help them to become self-directed learners.

In summary, student's views about their capabilities to regulate their behavior and to exercise control over task demands can determine if they perceive their learning environments to be either positive or negative. As a result, how students think, feel, and act is based on responses received from the environment. Thus students' views about their ability to meet particular challenges, or determine courses of action needed to perform actions within a given situation, affects their application of self-efficacy beliefs to the interpretation of classroom interactions.

Self-regulation. Students' views of their teachers determine their ability to exercise behavioral techniques for self-regulation (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Canter & Canter, 1983; Weinstein et al., 1987). Dubelle (1995) defined self-regulation as internal self-control. Dubelle stated that students develop self-regulation in three ways: (a) they learn to construct a personal understanding that they may have caused their own behavior, (b) they learn that other people's behaviors are guided by intentions, and (c) they learn that others usually (but not always) behave in predictable, consistent ways, which sets the stage for self-control of thought and behavior.

Piaget (1932/1965/1997) stated that children do not learn how to self-regulate when they are being controlled through a heteronomous relationship. Children learn how to self-regulate by experiencing relationships built on cooperation, trust, and respect. As a result, children learn to evaluate social and moral issues they encounter and determine what is right for them.

The relationship between adult control and self-regulation is supported by social learning theory (Bandura, 1995; Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Maddux, 1995). According to Bandura (1995), when students experience a unilateral environment, their perceptual functioning is impaired and their beliefs about their abilities, including their ability to self-regulate, is limited. Bandura, Cioffi, Taylor, and Brouillard (1988), McIntosh and Vaughn (1993), and Bandura (1995) contended that students who are taught self-regulating techniques come to believe their behavior is under their personal control; they begin to shape their personal development and circumstances of living, and they reflect on their perceptions of acceptable behaviors. In contrast, students

who have not been taught self-regulating techniques view themselves as unable to self-regulate or exercise control and experience a high level of stress, mental strain, and cognitive impairment. These students feel a loss of control, which leads to coping deficits and feelings of helplessness, which in turn affects their behavior in the classroom. As a result, they tend to dwell on their coping deficiencies and see their environment as fraught with threats. In doing so, they distress themselves, impairing their level of perceptual functioning with beliefs that limit their capabilities.

Longitudinal research by McIntosh and Vaughn (1993) supported Bandura et al's. (1988) and Bandura's (1995) contentions. They studied the importance of self-regulatory behaviors versus aggressive behaviors with 310 first- and second-grade students in 24 classrooms. Aggressive behaviors identified by teachers included blaming, being mean, fighting, taking without asking, bullying, and being angry. Results indicated that students (typically males) who display aggressive behaviors have poor social skills and are rejected by their peers. Students who observed aggressive behaviors in their peers viewed this behavior as inappropriate and their peers as unable to control their own behavior. McIntosh and Vaughn concluded that students who have not learned self-control need to be taught self-regulatory techniques and interventions that are specifically related to social skills. Otherwise, these aggressive behaviors tend to be stable over a long period of time and may result in additional inappropriate behaviors.

In summary, students' views about their ability to exercise self-control are learned through developing an understanding that they are responsible for their own behavior and that behaviors are guided by intentions. Students' views about their ability to self-

regulate are dependent upon their environment, relationship with their teacher, and whether or not they have been taught self-regulatory techniques. As a result, students' views about their ability to exercise control over their behaviors may have either a positive or negative affect on their ability to meet particular challenges, determining courses of action needed to perform actions within a given situation and students' interpretations of classroom interactions.

Factors that Affect Students' Views

Several factors that affect students' views include teachers' verbal and nonverbal cues, classroom environment, teachers' differential treatment of students, standards that encourage students to control their behavior, and teachers' use of external methods of control.

Verbal and nonverbal cues. Students interpret teachers' verbal and nonverbal cues to determine what classroom behaviors are considered appropriate (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Everson, Emmer, Clements, Sanford, & Worsham, 1989; Fields & Boesser, 1998; Woolfolk and Brooks, 1985). According to Berliner and Biddle (1995), by understanding these cues, students are better able to predict the consequences of their behavior because they can interpret various responses from their teachers.

Much of student behavior is developed in the course of students watching and emulating the behaviors of adults (Jones and Jones, 1995). By doing so, students use their self-beliefs for three purposes: to interpret teachers' nonverbal behaviors to determine how intelligent they are and how well they are doing in class (Weinstein et al., 1982), to

consider whether they are being treated differently from other students (Weinstein et al., 1987), and to decide their teacher's emotional affect (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985).

Woolfolk and Brooks's (1985) article examining the influence of teachers' nonverbal behaviors on students' self-beliefs, cooperation, attitudes, and student learning noted that first- through third-grade students' views and behaviors are influenced by the context in which the behavior occurs. Teacher behaviors do not have the same meaning for every child in a given situation. For example, with a "very demanding" activity, a teacher's frown may communicate high standards for high ability students, whereas the same non-verbal behavior may give a message of low expectations and impatience to "slow students" who are doing remedial work. Further, the teacher who smiles, makes eye contact, varies voice intonation, and teaches routines through modeling is viewed by students as effective in handling disruptive behaviors. Woolfolk and Brooks's article suggested that "in shaping students' perceptions about their own competence, cues from the teacher, in the form of feedback and decisions about instructional practices, are more important than the quality of the work itself or the students' mastery of tasks" (p. 519).

Woolfolk and Brooks (1985) suggested that negative teacher affect is expressed through frowns targeted toward students labeled as restless, immature, low in persistence, uncooperative, and rejected. In contrast, positive teacher affect is expressed when teachers lean forward, smile, nod affirmatively, and maintain eye contact. Bates (1976) suggested that teachers tend to use more words and speak in more positive tones when addressing students who are themselves more positive in their nonverbal behavior toward the teacher.

In summary, students' beliefs about teachers' nonverbal behaviors lead to changes in students' views about their teacher, influence the degree of approval the student receives, and shape student expectations and attitudes (Weinstein et al., 1987; Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985). These exchanges (verbal or nonverbal, positive or negative) impact a student's self-beliefs and his or her demonstration of self-efficacy.

Environment. Daniels et al.'s. (2001) study compared young children's views about teacher practices within a non-learner centered classroom and a learner-centered classroom. This empirical study with 66 kindergarten (6 year olds), first-grade (7 year olds), and second-grade (8 year olds) students indicated that no matter what type of classroom context they were in, students valued teachers who were warm, friendly, supportive, and flexible, and who provided stimulating activities, clear instructions, and constructive feedback. One significant difference in students' views was found. Students in learner-centered classrooms believed their teacher to be more caring and supportive than did students in non-learner centered classrooms.

Valeski and Stipek's (2001) research in 233 classrooms compared structured and less structured classroom settings by examining kindergarteners' and first grade students' views about classroom interactions with their teachers. Results were similar to Daniels et al.'s findings. Valeski and Stipek's empirical study with 225 kindergarteners and 127 first grade students considered students' views about their academic competence, relationships with their teachers, and attitudes toward school in highly teacher-directed classroom environments and compared them to findings from classrooms with less structure and control.

Data regarding students' academic achievement were collected and teacher questionnaires and classroom observations were utilized.

Results indicated that kindergartners from highly structured classrooms had negative beliefs toward school. Kindergarten and first grade students who had relatively close relationships with their teacher had more positive self-beliefs about their relationships with teachers than other students did.

In an empirical study with 747 elementary students (grades three through six), Burnett (2002) considered teacher praise and feedback and student self-beliefs. His results reinforced the idea that student-teacher relationships are related to students' beliefs about the classroom environment. For example, students who reported having positive relationships with their teachers viewed the classroom environment in a more positive way and tended to receive more positive feedback. However, students aged 8 to 10 reported more negative feedback from their teachers than did the older students. Burnett concluded that students within this age range appear to have a heightened sensitivity to teacher feedback. Burnett attributed his findings to students' maturation level.

In summary, the type of classroom environment impacts students' views of their relationships with their teachers, their academic competence, and their attitudes toward school. However, research has been unclear in defining the specific types of classroom environments in which students' views were examined. In other words, what environmental features cause students to form positive or negative views of their teachers? Whether it is the environment or teacher effect is not fully understood.

Differential treatment. Self-beliefs may become confused as a result of authority figures' behaviors. For example, unequal treatment among students can create feelings of failure (Weinstein et al., 1982; Weinstein et al., 1987). A series of crucial studies by Weinstein (Weinstein et al., 1982; Weinstein et al., 1987) demonstrated that students viewed teachers' treatment of high and low achievers differently.

In 1982, Weinstein et al. examined teachers' differential treatment of students in open and traditional classrooms. The study included 234 high and low achievers in grades four, five, and six. The Teacher Treatment Inventory was used to measure students' perceptions of the frequency of 44 teacher behaviors. Two findings were significant. First, students in open classrooms did not perceive less differential treatment of high and low achievers than students in traditional classrooms did. Second, in both classrooms, students viewed low achievers as receiving more negative feedback from the teacher, whereas they viewed that high achievers receive higher expectations, more opportunities, and more choices, with no significant difference in the treatment of males and females. Classroom context was not a significant factor in students' views of how students were treated. The authors questioned how students' views of teachers' interactions with other students affect their own ability to develop self-expectations for performance. Weinstein et al. suggested that interviews with students reveal three important links between teacher treatment and student beliefs: (a) students' capability to interpret teachers' verbal and nonverbal cues, (b) students' interpretation of differential teacher treatment and its influence on their beliefs about themselves, and (c) the relationship between students' self-beliefs, motivation, and academic performance.

In 1987, Weinstein et al. explored age-related differences in students' awareness of and response to differential treatment and teacher expectations among 579 students and their teachers in 30 first, third, and fifth grade classrooms. A revised Teacher Treatment Inventory was used to measure students' self-beliefs of the frequency of 30 teacher behaviors. Items on this instrument inventoried relationships among teaching behaviors and student achievement, expression of teacher expectations for behavior, and children's self-beliefs within classroom environments.

Some of the results showed evidence that (a) younger children (6-7 year olds) are as aware as older children (10-11 year olds) of differences in the teacher treatment of high and low achievers; (b) young children reported more frequent negative feedback and more frequent high expectations in teacher treatment than older children, especially with first and third graders; (c) younger children do not understand teachers' expectations as well as older children do; (d) individual children, regardless of grade, were aware of differential teacher treatment among students; and (e) over time, older children develop either positive or negative views of their own ability congruent with teachers' expectations. For example, when teachers' expectations of children are high, children's views of their own abilities are also high. Likewise, children who receive low expectations from their teacher report lower expectations for themselves.

In summary, grade-level differences reveal two important factors that influence student views of various classroom management strategies and how students interpret teachers' behaviors. First, school environment plays an important part in the development of children's expectations for learning. The environment is created by the teacher. If stu-

dents view equality and/or inequality of teacher treatment of students, positive and negative relationships are perceived accordingly. A positive environment in which equality is valued and implemented improves students' views of their capability for learning. Second, children's expectations of their own performance are contingent upon their teachers' expectations. When teachers' expectations of children are high, children's views of their own abilities are also high. Likewise, when the teacher has low expectations for their students, students' performance and feelings about their capabilities will also be low. These facts serve primarily to validate the argument that students' views are shaped by their perceptions of the treatment they receive from the teacher.

Standards. Standards motivate, guide behavior, and enable students to develop and evaluate their personal standards of behavior and weigh them against those set within the classroom. Dubelle (1995) and Duke (1979) stated that theoretically, teacher inconsistency in setting classroom standards and behavioral guidelines can result in behavioral problems. For example, Van Scoy (1994) examined teachers' practices of communicating standards to their students in six primary classrooms (grades one and two) and five intermediate classrooms (grades four and five) with fifty-five students. Students interviewed were asked to respond to two vignettes that dealt with behavioral problems such as yelling and out-of-seat behavior. They were then asked what the teacher would say and do if such an incident occurred in their own classrooms. Van Scoy's interpretation of the results indicated that students in the primary grades viewed their teachers as communicating classroom standards far more than did intermediate students. Both primary and intermediate students indicated that they find it difficult to interpret their teachers' expla-

nations of standards in regard to setting rules. These students felt that rules frequently changed and their teachers did not always administer the same consequence for inappropriate behaviors for each student.

In their article about student behaviors and classroom standards, Carlson and Goldman (1991) stated that classroom environment plays a critical role in how standards are set and communicated. These authors suggested that life in primary classrooms should be more tightly focused on helping students learn standards for appropriate behaviors than it is in intermediate classrooms. Carlson and Goldman noted that students who display inappropriate behaviors are often viewed by their teachers as challenges, threats, or as harmful to their environment, which may further the students' inability to succeed.

In summary, inconsistency in setting classroom standards and behavioral guidelines results in lack of discipline and is an ineffective discipline strategy with which to control inappropriate behaviors. Using vague or unenforceable classroom standards harms the students' ability to develop and evaluate personal standards. When standards are changed frequently, behavioral problems are likely to occur, limiting the student's ability to succeed. The classroom environment and the teacher's ability to administer effective management strategies both play a critical role in how standards are set and communicated.

External control. Review of articles indicated that coercion (external control) is defined as an aggressive act that humiliates the student and seriously damages self-esteem (Fields & Boesser, 1998; Hitz, 1988). Opponents of the use of external control claim it ignores the maturation levels of students (Gartrell, 1987) and instills angry feelings, dis-

engagement, and a disposition toward fighting (Autry & Langebach, 1985; Gartrell, 1987; Kohn, 1996; Schwarzer, 1992). DeVries and Zan (2002) claimed that the exercise of “external control” limits the child’s ability to be self-regulating and keeps the child in a state of egocentrism.

Autry and Langebach (1985) conducted an empirical study of 40 elementary students identified as demonstrating disruptive behaviors. Pre- and post-data were collected through administration of the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire to these students. Items on this questionnaire inventoried students’ beliefs about being rewarded for displaying constructive behaviors. During the study, students were observed in the classroom setting and reinforced for displaying appropriate behaviors by earning tokens. These tokens were then traded in for items at the school store. The authors found that when students are regulated by means of external control, it is very difficult for them to assimilate guidelines for appropriate behaviors. Autry and Langebach explained that students who are managed by external means have not been taught self-regulatory behavioral techniques for self-control, therefore leaving the students with few resources to draw from to control their own behaviors. Further, many students at this age are primarily concerned with being accepted by their classmates and desire to avoid public praise either through verbal means or by means of tokens. Therefore, they will show an inability to self-regulate. The authors concluded that these students react to coercion by simply submitting, fighting, or withdrawing until the power pressure is off and they can do as they please. It does not make much difference whether coercion is subtle or overt; students know when they have been or are being coerced.

In summary, external control affects students' views about their ability to control their own behavior. External control limits students' ability to reflect upon and assimilate guidelines for appropriate behavior, thus preventing them from developing personal convictions about appropriate behaviors. As a result, many students view themselves as having no personal ownership over their own behavior, which may result in the development of angry feelings, a disposition toward fighting, and disengagement from school work and relationships with others.

Conclusion

The first section of the literature review makes it clear that when asked, children are able to share a great deal about their experiences in school. By exploring children's views about classroom management and classroom environments, insight into how to reduce student misbehavior in schools may result. However, a gap in fully understanding children's views about their behavior still exists; research so far has offered limited focus on student views about teachers' management strategies at the elementary level. Further research is needed to examine the relationship between students' views of their teachers' management strategies and the students' ability to self-regulate.

Assertive Discipline

The following section describes the theoretical background behind Assertive Discipline, discusses specific classroom practices, including descriptions of the role of the teacher and rules, discusses research on the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline, and reviews several critiques of Assertive Discipline.

Theoretical Background

The dominant learning theory since the turn of the century has been behaviorism. The various forms of behaviorism such as operant conditioning, respondent conditioning, and modeling all share the view that learning is a response by the learner to various stimuli present in the environment.

The Assertive Discipline management plan is the cornerstone of behaviorist pedagogy. Assertive Discipline was founded by American teacher and psychologist Lee Canter and is a behavioral discipline plan congruent with B.F. Skinner's operant model. One of the primary goals of Assertive Discipline is the regulation of students' behaviors by the adults in authority (Canter, 1979).

In this stimulus-response view, the learner is a passive reactor whose learning is shaped through associating behaviors with their consequences. Whatever the student learns and does comes from environmental factors that are observable and measurable (Skinner, 1971) and can be modified by simply making adjustments in the students' external environment through drill, practice, rewards, and punishment (Canter & Canter, 1976; Lamberigts & Bergen, 2000). The Assertive Discipline approach is based on the premise that student behavior can be controlled through rewards for appropriate behaviors and punishments for inappropriate behaviors.

More than 750,000 teachers have been trained in Assertive Discipline since 1976 (Canter, 1987, 1989). Feldman (1994) estimated that at the time his article was published, approximately 85,000 additional teachers would be trained annually. Assertive Discipline is supported by the National Association of State Boards of Education (Feld-

man, 1994) and is widely used in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Central America, and the United States and is growing in popularity in the United Kingdom (Nicholls & Houghton, 1995; Render, Padilla, & Krank, 1989). Canter and Canter (2001) contended that it “has helped more than 1.5 million teachers” (p. v.).

Classroom Practices

Canter and Canter (1992) contended that Assertive Discipline did not evolve as much from theory as from a more reliable source, classroom teachers. Canter and Canter (1976, 2001) extensively researched the characteristics of effective teachers and found that without some systematized plan for dealing with students when they misbehave, teachers’ reactions tend to be emotional, unpredictable, and arbitrary. This section reviews the role of the teacher and rules in Assertive Discipline classrooms.

Role of the teacher in Assertive Discipline. According to Brown and Payne (1988), Assertive Discipline was developed in the 1970’s when teachers were rebounding from a period when their authority was being questioned and challenged. The Assertive Discipline plan stresses that it is the teacher’s responsibility to control students, as students are passive recipients of adult management. Canter (1989) stated, “Research has demonstrated that Assertive Discipline works and that it isn’t just a quick-fix solution. Teachers who are effective year after year, take the basic Assertive Discipline competencies and mold them to their individual teaching styles” (p. 60).

According to Canter and Canter (1976, 1992), Assertive Discipline is an answer to two inappropriate response styles teachers use when communicating with their students. The first response style is nonassertive: the teacher appears powerless, does not set firm

classroom expectations, and is inconsistent in managing behavior, reacting to inappropriate behavior in a passive mode one day and anger another day. The second response style is hostility: the teacher responds to students in a hostile manner in an attempt to get the teacher's own needs met in the classroom, but does so at the expense of the feelings and self-esteem of students. Students usually perceive this response to mean that their teacher does not like them, or that what they are doing is wrong.

Canter and Canter (1976, 2001) and Canter (1979, 1989) advocated the assertive response style, which is demonstrated when the teacher tells students exactly what behavior is acceptable and what is unacceptable. According to Canter and Canter (1976, 2001), the assertive teacher is positive, understands students' needs, directs students' attention toward appropriate behavior, and immediately recognizes and reinforces appropriate behavior. Students learn to trust and respect an assertive teacher because they know that the teacher means what (s)he says, and says what (s)he means; therefore, students understand the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

The Assertive Discipline approach is an attempt to help teachers establish more consistent assertive responses (verbal reprimands) everyday, consisting of the teacher telling students exactly what behavior is acceptable and what is unacceptable, what will happen when the student chooses to behave in certain ways, and what will happen when the student chooses not to behave in certain ways. Examples of verbal reprimands are as follows: "The direction was to work without talking. That's a reminder" (Canter & Canter, 2001, p. 66); "There is no fighting allowed in this classroom. You have chosen to go to the principal's office" (Canter & Canter, 2001, p. 68). According to Canter and Canter

(1992, 2001), assertive reprimands prepare students to choose the behavior that will ensure their success in class and help them to internalize classroom rules. Eventually, the need for teachers to use such reprimands will decrease.

Research conducted on Assertive Discipline classrooms tends to support this contention. Nicholls and Houghton (1995) examined 15 teachers' rates of verbal approval and disapproval before and after Assertive Discipline training. The data showed that after training in Assertive Discipline, rates of verbal approval increased significantly from 0.36 to 1.11 responses per minute, and rates of verbal disapproval significantly decreased, from 1.07 to 0.50 responses per minute. Nicholls and Houghton concluded, "The structure of Assertive Discipline attempts to eliminate or at least reduce the use of verbal reprimands and the possibility of teacher responses inadvertently reinforcing the inappropriate social behaviors that classroom teachers state are most troublesome" (p. 207).

Role of rules in Assertive Discipline classrooms. Rules play a central role in Assertive Discipline classrooms. Canter and Canter (1992) outlined three major principles for assertive teachers that create an environment in which student self-esteem can flourish. These principles reflect specific rights and responsibilities of teachers. All three of these principles relate to rules. In order to control students, teachers must:

1. Establish rules and directions that clearly define the limits of acceptable and unacceptable student behavior
2. Teach students to consistently follow these rules and directions throughout the school day and school year by providing examples of rules

3. Enforce rules through negative and corrective feedback. Ask for assistance from parents and administrators when support is needed in handling the behavior of students. (p. 5)

The following section describes how rules are developed in Assertive Discipline classrooms (including examples of typical Assertive Discipline rules), how teachers enforce rules, and how they encourage rule-following.

Development of rules. Canter and Canter (2001) indicated that teachers must establish rules that are observable and applicable throughout the entire day. The Canters stated that the teacher must avoid rules that are not enforceable throughout the entire day. An example of an unenforceable rule is one that requires students to raise their hand and wait to be called on before they speak. There are many times throughout the day where this rule is inappropriate. Teachers are also encouraged to choose rules that work for them and to involve students in choosing some of the rules.

Canter and Canter (1976, 2001) emphasized that teachers often develop classroom rules and consequences with little or no student input. Including students in the selection of rules gives them ownership in the classroom discipline plan. However, the teacher must be sure that the final rules are appropriate, realistic, follow the Assertive Discipline management model, and meet the needs of the teacher. Therefore, the teacher is the final authority.

The Assertive Discipline plan encourages teachers to develop rules that apply to behavior only. Rules should not address academic or homework issues. Rules selected by teachers should clarify all behaviors that are expected from students.

Assertive Discipline teachers are instructed to establish no more than five rules for their classrooms. Typical examples of rules include following instructions the first time they are given, keeping noise levels low, keeping hands, feet, and objects to one's self, following directions, and using appropriate school language (avoiding put-downs, teasing, or bad language). Thus, when teachers teach classroom rules to students while providing consistent, objective, and specific feedback about expected behavior, there is no excuse for student misbehavior (Canter & Canter, 1976; 1992; 2001).

Enforcement of rules. For rule-enforcement to be effective, Canter and Canter (1976) stated that students must experience negative consequences when they behave inappropriately. Punishments (Canter & Canter, 1976), redefined in the Canter's later work as "corrective actions" or "negative consequences" (Canter & Canter, 2001), are non-negotiable and established for students who engage in rule-breaking behavior (Canter, 1989). The Canter's (2001) defined punishments as humiliating, criticizing, or causing physical pain to the student. According to them, punishments breed resentment in students and prevent them from taking responsibility for their behavior. The Canter's stated that corrective actions are not punishments. Rather, they are predictable responses to specific behaviors and are determined by the teacher. Canter and Canter (2001) stated, "The key is not the corrective action itself, but the inevitability that an action will be taken each time a rule is broken or a direction is not followed—not just sometimes, not every now and then, but every single time" (p. 139).

For example, if students choose to break the rules, the corrective actions, also defined as consequences, are rigid and allow for no exceptions, and it is the teacher who

decides what the consequences should be. The teacher implements an escalating scale of no more than five consequences. In 1976, the Canter's urged teachers to write students' names on the board and place a checkmark beside the name for every refusal to comply with a rule. For every checkmark, the student might be denied recess or sent to the principal's office, or the teacher might call a parent. Canter and Canter (2001) now recommend that teachers establish a discipline hierarchy which includes reminding the student of the rule he or she broke, changing the student's seat, asking the student to stay after class, contacting the parent, and sending the student to the principal. Canter and Canter (2001) stressed that the teacher must stay calm, yet firm, be consistent, use physical proximity, and ask for assistance in critical situations.

Encouraging rule-following behavior. To help students learn behavioral expectations and motivate them to behave responsibly and appropriately, teachers also implement class-wide reward systems. Two examples are putting students' names on the board for good behavior (Canter & Canter, 2001) and/or placing marbles in a jar when students follow classroom rules. When the jar is full, the whole class receives a special reward. Canter (1989) stated, however, "I don't want teachers to believe they have to use names and checks on the board or marbles in a jar. I want teachers to learn that they have to take charge, explain their expectations, be positive with students, and consistently employ both positive reinforcement and negative consequences" (p. 60-61).

The Assertive Discipline plan suggests that a variety of rewards can be used to reinforce the behavior of students choosing to follow the rules (Canter, 1989; Canter & Canter, 1976, 2001). Canter (1989) noted that the key to Assertive Discipline is "catching

students being good and letting them know that you like it” (p. 58). Canter and Canter (2001) defined this as supportive feedback. Therefore, to reward students for appropriate behavior, Assertive Discipline teachers use supportive feedback in the form of praise, stickers, popcorn parties, and white elephant raffles. Classroom valuables, such as stuffed animals, books, and toys can sometimes be rented for a specified period of time, and tickets can be earned, and then spent for special privileges such as free time as a means of supportive feedback (Canter, 1988; Canter & Canter, 1976, 2001). Canter and Canter (2001) claimed that supportive feedback will “encourage students to continue appropriate behavior, increase students’ self-esteem, dramatically reduce problem behaviors, create a positive classroom environment, help the teacher teach appropriate behavior and establish positive relationships with students” (p. 42). Further, students also experience intrinsic rewards such as the inner satisfaction of self-discovery, self-evaluation, and working in cooperation with others (Canter, 1988).

Research Supporting the Effectiveness of Assertive Discipline

Research suggests that at the third grade level, Assertive Discipline has been shown to be effective in reducing inappropriate student behaviors in two areas: (a) classroom disruptions such as out of seat behavior and inappropriate talking (Mandlebaum, Russell, Krouse, & Gunter, 1983; Moffett, Jurenka, & Kovan, 1982; Ward, 1984), and (b) off-task behavior (McCormack, 1985; McCormack, 1987; Nicholls & Houghton, 1995).

Effect on classroom disruptions. Moffett et al.’s (1982) empirical study focused on teachers’ claims that Assertive Discipline virtually eliminated classroom disruptions in the Lennox, California, school district. The only data presented, however, were the re-

sults of a survey of teachers' views after implementation of Assertive Discipline. The ninety-four responses (representing 67% of the district's teachers) indicated that 21% viewed student behavior as somewhat improved, 48% viewed student behavior as improved to an observable degree, and 30% viewed student behavior as totally improved. With no baseline data for comparison with the classroom pre-Assertive Discipline implementation, and no comparison group, these data may not support the claim that classroom disruptions had been virtually eliminated. Moreover, one-third of the teachers in the district failed to respond to the survey. In addition, the supporting information is based exclusively on teachers' views. Neither student views nor observational data were collected.

Mandlebaum et al. (1983) studied a third grade classroom with 31 students. Classroom disruptions such as out-of-seat behavior and inappropriate talking were the focus of the study. Before the teacher was trained in Assertive Discipline, out-of-seat behavior occurred 96.3 percent of the time and inappropriate talking occurred 98.9 percent of the time. After Assertive Discipline was implemented, out-of-seat behavior was significantly reduced to 42 percent and inappropriate talking reduced to 65 percent of the time. This study concluded that the inappropriate behaviors exhibited in a third grade classroom could be reduced by half.

Ward (1984) also found a significant effect on classroom disruptions following the implementation of Assertive Discipline in third-grade classrooms. Results indicated a reduction from 17.09 disruptions per 100 students per day to 6.65 disruptions per 100 students per day after the introduction of Assertive Discipline. However, chi-square

analysis revealed many variables that confounded the results of the study, such as teacher gender, years of experience, highest degree earned, grade level taught, attitude toward corporal punishment, attitude toward Assertive Discipline, and school size. These factors were all significantly related to the decrease in disruptions. Therefore, it is difficult to separate Assertive Discipline from the other variables as the cause of significant change.

Effect on off-task behavior. McCormack (1985) and Nicholls and Houghton (1995) examined Assertive Discipline and students' off-task behavior. McCormack's (1985) dissertation study of 36 third-grade classrooms (a total of 687 students) quantified off-task behavior during reading instruction. In the 18 classrooms where Assertive Discipline was not used, off-task behavior occurred 12.5% of the time compared to 7.5% in the 18 classrooms where Assertive Discipline was used. McCormack concluded that Assertive Discipline is the strongest predictor for control of off-task behaviors, accounting for 9% of the variance in students' off-task behavior. Three percent of the variance was accounted for by teacher qualifications, and two percent of the variance was accounted for by students' reading ability (see Render et al., 1989, for additional evidence).

Nicholls and Houghton's (1995) empirical study examined three focus areas: off-task behavior, frequency of students' disruptive behavior, and teacher verbal approval and disapproval. Their study was conducted in 5 British primary schools with 120 third, fourth, and fifth graders. It focused on students' off-task behavior and the frequency of students' disruptive behavior. Six days after teachers received training in Assertive Discipline, results showed an increase in on-task behavior from 61.34% to 87.18 %. In addition, the mean number of student disruptive behavior was reduced from 2.73 to 0.98.

However, these studies all focused on short-term changes and “no follow-up measures were taken . . . therefore, no conclusions can be drawn about teachers’ and students’ maintenance of behavior change” (p. 207).

Critique of Assertive Discipline

Assertive Discipline continues to gain support as an educational approach. However, the following areas of criticism leveled at the approach have emerged: unsupported research claims in support of the method; negative views of Assertive Discipline teachers; manipulation of students through praise; and overall negative effects on young children.

Unsupported research claims. The Canters (1976, 2002) claimed to have conducted extensive research into the characteristics of an effective teacher who is in control of her classroom and the reasons why the Assertive Discipline approach is effective for controlling student behaviors. Render et al. (1989) conducted a review of ten dissertations, three journal articles, and three research reports to investigate the Canters’ assertions about the effects of Assertive Discipline. These authors came to four conclusions based on their review. First, there are no research results or methods published by the Canters to test their approach. Second, the statistics that do exist are inadequate and do not support the Canters’ assertions about the effectiveness of their Assertive Discipline approach. Third, without these types of research, findings about the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline cannot be generalized. Fourth, the effectiveness of the Assertive Discipline approach has not been compared to the effectiveness of other discipline or classroom management programs.

Nicholls and Houghton (1995) stated that research pertaining to the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline has either been anecdotal (see Nicholls & Houghton, 1995; Render et al., 1984; Ersavas, 1981; or Henderson, 1982, for further discussion) or has consisted of attitudinal surveys (see Nicholls & Houghton, 1995; Render et al., 1984). Nicholls and Houghton further noted that there is no baseline data with which to perform pre-and-post-comparisons. In addition, studies fail to report changes in students' behavior, as well as providing vague information about the extent and manner in which teachers implement Assertive Discipline. Nicholls and Houghton concluded that because of the lack of empirical data in existing studies, some research may have reported unjustified and inappropriate conclusions about the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline.

Negative perceptions of Assertive Discipline teachers. Perceptions of teachers of Assertive Discipline form a basis for one type of criticism of the model. In their article reviewing Canter and Canter's methods of classroom control, Davidman and Davidman (1984) stated that Assertive Discipline teachers are sometimes viewed as those who use authoritarian methods and irrational means of control that harm the child's psyche. This occurs when arbitrary, negative, class-wide consequences are selected. The teacher does not take into account the uniqueness of the child or the classroom situation. As a result, children's needs are ignored in favor of dictating to them how to behave and punishing them when they don't comply. Davidman and Davidman claimed that because of this, teachers using Assertive Discipline are using counter-productive and illogical methods for dealing with children; the approach encourages teachers to deal with the symptoms of

inappropriate behaviors in a superficial manner without attending to the causes of misbehavior.

Render et al. (1989) stated that Assertive Discipline teachers use the words “good” and “bad” to describe appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, control students through use of frequent praise and authoritarian means including punishment, and create an environment in which the teacher’s needs are met first. Render et al. argued that being described as good or bad is a strong negative message for young children. In addition, they argued that punishment should be the last resort, and students do not learn to become assertive adults if their needs do not seem to be an issue in their learning environment.

Braun, Render, and Moon (1984) found that 71% of elementary and junior high school students (n=1,087) surveyed regarding their views of rule making in their Assertive Discipline classroom reported negative views such as rarely or never having the opportunity to help establish class rules. The teachers determined rules and consequences, and the students were told that they could choose either to obey or not obey. As a result, friction in the teacher-student relationship occurred and inappropriate behaviors surfaced.

Manipulation of students through praise, rewards, and punishment. Several authors believe that rewards and supportive feedback (praise) such as that used by Assertive Discipline teachers manipulate students’ thoughts and behaviors, causing students to become dependent on others (Kohn, 1993, 1996; Seefeldt, 1987; Stinger & Hurt, 1981).

With regard to praise, Katz (1994) stated, “frequent praise may be accepted by children with pleasure but it is difficult to know when it begins to lose its value and be dis-

missed by students as empty teacher talk” (p. 11). According to Mangin’s (1998) article on praise and young children, “children who rely on praise are dependent on outside control, and thus their autonomous functioning is constrained” (p. 15). As young children’s dependence on praise grows, they expect to be rewarded more and more (Mangin, 1998), become conditioned to the quick payoff, and are likely to avoid challenging tasks requiring persistence and complex reasoning (Labinowicz, 1985). As a result, they lose their motivation to focus on what is to be learned (Stinger et al., 1981). Based on an exhaustive review of the literature, Kohn (1993) concluded that praise “signals low ability, makes people feel pressured, invites a low-risk strategy to avoid failure, and reduces interest in the task itself” (p. 101).

In an article reinforcing these criticisms, Wade (1997), the principal of a school implementing Assertive Discipline, described his attempt to improve school-wide behavior and build a new sense of community by means of praise, rewards, and punishment.

However, after one year, the school dropped the program because staff found that students were being motivated to learn solely by these means. Wade stated,

clearly we were manipulating and controlling behavior instead of instilling sound values. Students did not miss being praised nor the rewards and their behavior got no worse. Our system of rewards and punishments, including frequent calls home about misbehavior did more to destroy community than build it. (p. 34-35)

Wade (1997) claimed that when the teachers changed the focus from teacher solutions to student solutions and gave students more responsibility, the school climate improved. As a result, students became more responsible for their own behavior, and instead of being controlled through praise, rewards, and punishment, they were taught

problem-solving skills, listening skills, and communication skills. As a result, the students became empowered to handle their own problems.

Critics of Assertive Discipline claim that rather than using coercive means to guide children's behavior, non-punitive intervention techniques should be used to help students function at their best (Autry & Langebach, 1985; Bauer, Sheere, Dettore, 1997; DeVries, 1991b; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Glasser, 1990b; Palardy, 1996; Zahorik, 1995).

Negative effects on young children. According to Fay and Cline (1994), Fields and Boesser (1998, 2002), Gartrell (1987), Hitz (1988), and Kohn (1996), Assertive Discipline negatively affects young children aged four through eight. For children in this age range, attitudes are being formed toward school. According to critics of Assertive Discipline, children who experience negative consequences will develop negative self-image, perceiving themselves to be failures. Further, these authors suggested that Assertive Discipline strategies are dehumanizing to students. As some authors repeatedly note, punishment humiliates students (Fields & Boesser, 1998), disengages them from school and the learning process (Gartrell, 1987; Kohn, 1996), and leaves them feeling powerless (Hitz, 1988). Students who are punished are controlled and regulated by another's will, interests, purposes, knowledge, and morality, which will harm the student in all areas of development (DeVries, 1991).

Summary

This section of literature review is important in order to build background information about the Assertive Discipline management plan and to evaluate research on Assertive Discipline critically. In addition, describing classroom practices, the role of the teacher,

and rules within an Assertive Discipline classroom provides information needed to interpret data related to the research questions.

While supporters of Assertive Discipline claim that Assertive Discipline has been shown to be effective in reducing inappropriate student behaviors, detractors believe that the harm done to children by using such authoritarian methods outweighs the possible benefits. It is the purpose of this study to survey students regarding their own views about the Assertive Discipline methods in order to better understand what they view as effective or ineffective.

The Constructivist Approach

The following section describes the theoretical background of constructivism, describes classroom practices through which the role of a constructivist teacher is defined, and explores rules in a constructivist classroom. The section will conclude with research arguing the effectiveness of constructivist education and a critique of the approach.

Theoretical Background

The constructivist approach is built within a democratic environment in which teachers provide opportunities for students to develop negotiation strategies, learn to cooperate, act autonomously, construct meaningful behaviors, and gain exposure to logical and natural consequences for inappropriate behaviors.

The framework for constructivist education is based on Piaget's theory of social-cognitive development, which explains learning as a process of construction from within the student (Artsined, 2002; DeVries, 2002; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Piaget, 1932/1965/1997; Rainer, Guyton, & Bowen, 2000; SEDLetter, 1996; Zahorik, 1995)

rather than one of internalization or absorption from the environment (Kamii, 1982).

From this perspective, learning is not viewed as a linear transformation of mental structures. Rather, learning is mediated through the development of students' sociocognitive actions (DeVries, 1991; Goffin, 1994; Hashimoto, 1996; Kamii, 1982; Piaget, 1932/1965/1997), such as solving problems, making decisions, developing interpersonal understandings (Bodner, Klobuchar, & Geelan, n.d.; Kamii, 1982), making mistakes and experiencing consequences for those mistakes (DeVries, 2002), and on personal experiences and interactions with the environment (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Vasquez & Stipek, 2000).

DeVries (1997) stated that there are three parallels between constructivist education and Piaget's theory of sociomoral and cognitive development. The three common threads among the theories are as follows: (a) knowledge of the world is constructed by the child, (b) affect is a motivational factor in the development of intellect, and (c) equilibration (or self-regulation) is a process of development in four domains: social, moral, cognitive, and affective. Therefore, DeVries (2002) advocated designing constructivist curricula to promote children's development in all domains of learning, appealing to their interests while fostering cooperation between teacher and child and among children.

In contrast to Assertive Discipline's emphasis on external control, the constructivist emphasis is on the development of self-regulation. Based on Piaget's social theory, constructivist education is "an approach to understanding human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion that assumes that people are capable of self-reflection and self-regulation and that they are active shapers of their environments rather than simply pas-

sive reactors to them” (Maddux, 1995, p. 4). According to constructivist educators, constructivist education seeks to coordinate students’ own feelings and perspectives with those of others (DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998) and emphasizes intrinsic motivation (DeVries, 2002).

Teacher’s Role and Classroom Practices

Although specific elements of constructivist pedagogy differ somewhat across articles and literature reviews, books, and studies, there is remarkable consistency with respect to the idea of the teacher’s role in creating a sociomoral environment in which the teacher implements strategies organized to meet students’ physiological, emotional, and intellectual needs (DeVries, 2002; Fields & Tarlow, 1996). The following discussion of classroom practices focuses on the role of the teacher and on rules.

Two roles of the constructivist teacher are important in constructivist pedagogy: (a) fostering respect and cooperation, and (b) promoting student autonomy.

Fostering respect and cooperation. Sociomoral development is supported through emphasis on respect and cooperation for each person. The constructivist teacher fosters respect and cooperation between adults and students and among students themselves (DeVries & Zan, 1994, 2002), thus helping them to “develop moral feelings and convictions that take into account the best interests of all parties” (DeVries, 1997, p. 5). These convictions help children move from impulsivity to reflectivity (DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998) and from egocentrism to decentering (DeVries & Zan, 1994). To this end, cooperation, with its implicit reciprocity, is critical to the sociomoral environment. The teacher recognizes cooperative peer relationships as important, and students are moti-

vated to understand the perspectives of others (Artsined, 2002; DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998; DeVries & Zan, 1994).

The teacher invests a large amount of time helping students to decenter to consider the other person's perspective. By doing so, students learn to think about others' feelings and intentions. The idea of decentering is a centerpiece of constructivist behavior management. Students are taught the interpersonal skills needed to engage in positive social interaction (Artsined, 2002; DeVries, Reese-Learned et al., 1991; DeVries & Zan, 1994). To do this effectively, the teacher must strive to understand how students think and reason; that is, to engage in decentering themselves and to understand their students' perspectives (DeVries & Zan, 1994; DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987; Kamii, 1982; Rainer et al., 2000).

Brooks and Brooks (1993, 1999) claimed that it is important to understand students' suppositions and points of view relating to classmates, teachers, and themselves because the relevance and interest students perceive are largely a function of their own classroom experiences.

Developing student autonomy. According to Kamii (1982), students in a constructivist classroom are provided with interest-based activities that offer opportunities for them to achieve personal autonomy. Autonomy can be demonstrated in three areas: (a) the relationship between the students and teacher, (b) self-reflection and independence when associating with peers, and (c) students' freedom to learn at a level appropriate to their developmental age. Youniss and Damon (1992) and DeVries (2002) defined an autonomous person as someone who feels responsible to justify his or her position to an-

other person, listens to the other person's views, and develops relationships built on respect and cooperation, which evolve from self-regulation. Autonomous students are able to regulate and direct their own behavior and learning. They can internalize rules, effectively control their emotional reactions, and evaluate their own performance.

Knowing this, constructivist teachers center their approach around children's understanding, rather than a traditional approach of covering the content and not addressing the students' need for moral development (Burk & Dunn, 1996). One significant implication of this method is an approach to student error in the learning process that is very different from traditional instruction. DeVries and Zan (1994) stated, "The most distinguishing characteristic of a constructivist approach is the teacher's respect for children's errors, as errors can lead to construction of more adequate knowledge. Respecting children means accepting the meanings they construct, even when these are wrong" (p. 259). As a result, children learn critical thinking skills necessary for self-evaluation, self-monitoring, and behavioral adjustment.

Rules

The following discussion is divided into four topic areas: (a) developing rules, (b) enforcing rules, (c) eliciting student input, and (d) involving students in classroom discussions.

Developing rules. Within the constructivist classroom, rules are established to promote respect, fairness, and positive interaction among the teacher and students. DeVries and Zan (1994) suggested ten guidelines to accomplish goals in constructivist rule-

making. They are

1. Avoid using the word “rule” at first. The teacher provides alternative words to be used that represent positive phrases such as “Ways we respect each other.” The word “rule” can be introduced later on in the year.
2. Discuss possible solutions to particular needs or problems when they arise.
3. Discuss the purpose for rules and what the students’ responsibility is to other classmates and themselves for following the rules.
4. Accept the students’ ideas when discussing rules. When recording the rules, use the students’ words in order to provide a sense of ownership.
5. Help children think about what they can do versus what they can’t in the classroom.
6. Discuss with the students an alternative rule when a rule is not effective.
7. Suggest rules to students instead of dictating them. This allows them to take ownership of the rules.
8. Discuss students’ suggestion for unacceptable rules by explaining the reasons why these rules cannot be accepted. By doing so, teachers will encourage students to think more reflectively.
9. Make a list of rules while they are being developed. DeVries and Zan suggest that the teacher and students vote to accept or reject the list, and then everyone signs the list. In this way, students are aware of each and every rule.
10. Discuss with children that teachers must also follow rules, as they are a member of the class and respectful of the group decision making process.

Enforcing rules. In spite of the emphasis on self-regulation, constructivist teachers acknowledge that behavior problems can surface. Children inevitably break rules, even when they have a major role in determining them. However, authoritarian demands, emotional intimidation, and arbitrary punishments have no place in a constructivist classroom. According to DeVries (2002), neither does passive permissiveness nor letting children run wild. DeVries asserted that constructivists do not support failure to take action when rules are broken and when children engage in unsafe, aggressive, or defiant behaviors. For example, when a child has broken a rule, the constructivist teacher interviews the child, validates the child's feelings, helps the child to understand the perspectives of others, and helps him or her to construct a different approach to the behavior.

Waldron and Applegate (1998) reported that constructivist educators advocate an environment in which students are exposed to a "highly differentiated, abstract, and integrated set of constructs for understanding social situations, goals, and the perspectives of others" (p. 53). To this end, constructivist teachers do not punish students; rather, they support the use of non-punitive acts of reciprocity as consequences of negative behavior (DeVries & Zan, 1994; DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998; Piaget, 1932/1965/1997) and as a method of guiding students' behavior (Bauer et al., 1997; DeVries, 1991; Glasser, 1990b).

Piaget (1932/1965/1997) discussed six types of reciprocity sanctions, illustrating some specific constructivist responses to classroom transgressions that help to guide constructivist teachers' decisions about how to deal with transgressions.

The first type of reciprocity sanction, which should be used selectively, is to have the student experience the natural and logical consequences of the transgression. For example, if a child breaks pieces of a game, the teacher may point out that the game is less enjoyable to use (DeVries & Zan, 1994). The constructivist teacher verbalizes the cause-effect relation and selectively allows natural consequences to occur, when those consequences are not dangerous. For example, because the natural consequence of running into the street is getting hit by a car, this would never be allowed, for obvious reasons.

Second, restitution, is “paying for or replacing broken or stolen objects” (Piaget, 1997, p. 208) and repairing damage done to someone (DeVries & Zan, 1994). According to Hoffman (1994), restitution benefits the person wronged as well as the person who has done the wrong.

The third reciprocity sanction is depriving the transgressor of the thing they misused. An example is not lending a student a book that they have written on or abused. According to Piaget (1997), this kind of consequence is “a sort of termination of contract owing to the conditions of the contract not having been observed” (p. 208).

The fourth reciprocity sanction, exclusion, is a momentary or permanent exclusion from the social group for violating the rights of others. It can be invoked by children, for example when they decide not to include in a game a child who consistently cheats. Or it can be invoked by an adult, for example when a teacher decides that a child is behaving aggressively and cannot be allowed around other children until he or she calms down. According to DeVries and Zan (1994), exclusion is a logical consequence and offers a non-punitive approach to punishment. Children are given the opportunity to take them-

selves away from a situation in which they are being hurtful or disruptive, to sit quietly at a table and return when they feel ready to cooperate. It is best if teachers give the child responsibility for control of the exclusion and explain to the student under what circumstances they can be reinstated to normal classroom participation.

The fifth reciprocity sanction refers to doing to the student exactly what he or she has done to someone else. However, this sanction is very rarely used and is generally considered inappropriate for adults to use with students. Piaget contended that “this kind of punishment, while it is perfectly legitimate, means giving back evil for evil and capping one irreparable destruction with another” (Piaget, 1997, p. 208). For example, an appropriate use of this sanction is for a teacher to remind students that if they refuse to help her, she may not be able to help them when they need help (DeVries & Zan, 1994).

The sixth reciprocity sanction, censure, is defined as making the student aware that his or her actions have broken the bond of solidarity and have caused a “disruption in a relationship” (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Its purpose is to help students realize the significance of their misdeeds by making clear the consequences that follow their violation of the rules (Piaget, 1965). For example, in a private conversation, a teacher may express disappointment with a student because of a wrong that (s)he has done. DeVries and Zan mentioned that the remorse a child may feel may be far stronger in reaction to this consequence than it would be after a harsher punishment.

DeVries and Zan (1994) concluded that when dealing with transgressions, constructivist educators should guide students toward self-regulation, protect students’ autonomy,

guide students toward the facts, support students, encourage students' ownership of logical consequences, and avoid indefinite and punitive consequences.

Eliciting student input. Student involvement is critical to the establishment of rules in constructivist classrooms. DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) stated that adult-imposed rules for behavior "never lead to the kind of reflection necessary for commitment to a set of internal or autonomous principles of moral judgment" (p. 31). According to Ikram and Bratlien (1994), constructivist teachers believe that disruptive behaviors decrease when students learn how to construct meaningful behaviors for themselves. Students become more responsible for their own behavior and development through the process of learning listening, communication, and problem solving skills, as well as being engaged in the development of classroom rules.

Therefore, the constructivist teacher's function is to guide students to make decisions about rules in the classroom and provide opportunities for them to exercise and regulate their own behaviors in relationship with other students (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Three objectives of inviting student input, as outlined by DeVries and Zan, are "to promote feelings of necessity about rules and fairness, to promote feelings of ownership of classroom rules, procedures, and decisions, and to promote feelings of shared responsibility for what goes on in the class and how the group gets along together" (p. 126).

Fields and Tarlow (1996) and Glaserfeld (2002) claimed that students base decisions about how to behave on what they know, not on the basis of what the world might actually be like. The only rules and regulations the student can use are those they have somehow found and come to trust in their own experiences. In order to help students think for

themselves, they must be given the opportunity to make rules. In order to do this, the classroom must be democratic in practice (DeVries & Zan, 2003).

Involving Students in Classroom Decision-Making

Two ways in which student involvement is elicited in a constructivist classroom to find out what students know and teach them to resolve conflicts are conflict resolution and classroom meetings.

Conflict resolution. Conflict resolution is an approach whereby a mediator and involved parties seek to find the facts of the conflict, identify underlying issues, and generate mutually beneficial solutions. This approach is used when confrontations arise that affect the relationships among students. In recent years, conflict management/resolution programs have been developed for use in many schools (Johnson, 1995), empowering students to find solutions to their own problems and improving teachers' responses to their students' emotional struggles (Davey, 1994; Johnson, 1995). Students construct a repertoire of negotiation strategies as a result of engaging in conflict resolution (DeVries & Zan, 1994). The goal is for children to work collaboratively, develop problem-solving strategies (Hashimoto, 1996; Kohn, 1996), and develop reciprocal relationships between themselves and teachers (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Conflict resolution results in helping students become more autonomous in developing self-regulating skills and taking responsibility for their own behavior.

Classroom meetings. According to DeVries and Zan (1994), constructivist teachers use classroom meetings as a tool in the management of classroom behaviors. Students develop a sense of community and cooperation as they are given the opportunity to make

choices about activities, vote on rules, and discuss classroom procedures. Many authors note that classroom meetings foster social and moral development of individual students and the class as a whole by providing opportunities for students to sort out their feelings and work through their conflicts (Charles, 2000; Developmental Studies Center, 1996; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Elias, Bruene-Butler, Blum, & Schuyler, 1997; Gazada & Corsini, 1980; Glasser, 1965; Lickona, Geis, & Kohlberg, 1976; Sorsdahl & Sanche, 1985).

Research on Effectiveness of Constructivist Education

Reforms in teaching in several fields are showing a particularly strong influence from constructivist pedagogy (Fosnot, 1989 & 1996; Richardson, 1997; Woolley et al., 1999), including computer science (Brown, 1996), literacy (Cambourne, 1988), math (Kamii, 1982, 1989), science education (Duckworth, Easley, Jawkings & Henriques, 1990; Umass Physics Education Research Group, 2002), and social studies (Rice, Wilson, Stallworth, Bagley, & Rice, 2000).

Research on third grade students' views of their teacher's approaches to discipline and their teacher's behaviors in a constructivist classroom is nonexistent. However, research on constructivist education at the third grade level has shown the approach to be effective in the area of students' attitude, efficacy, and achievement (Morse, 1995), and on problem solving skills and conflict resolution (Developmental Studies Center, 1996).

Attitude, efficacy, achievement. Morse (1995) compared twenty-four second grade students who had experienced constructivist education in preschool through grade two with twenty-six second-grade students who had not experienced constructivist education. Morse followed these students through their completion of third grade. The two groups'

attitudes, sense of efficacy, and classroom achievement were compared. Results indicated that the groups were equal on achievement in test performance, but students' ratings of their competence and problem solving ability were lower in the non-constructivist group compared to the constructivist group. Students' ratings of their enjoyment of school were equivalent.

Problem solving and conflict resolution. According to the Developmental Studies Center (1996) in California, an organization that works to help implement constructivist practices in schools, students are more successful at problem solving skills and conflict resolution when teachers implement constructivist teaching practices. DeVries (2002) reported that in 1998, the Developmental Studies Center effectively provided staff development for kindergarten through sixth grade teachers with 615-665 students. As a result of being trained in constructivist practices, findings indicated that students "showed clear gains in their sense of the schools as a community, showed positive changes in a range of attitudes, inclinations, feelings, and behaviors, and expressed greater sense of personal efficacy" (p. 11).

Critique of Constructivist Education

As constructivism has gained support as an educational approach, proponents have asked teachers to make a 180-degree turn from traditional practice (Artsined, 2002), which requires rigorous intellectual commitment and perseverance from both students and teachers (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). As a result, the following criticisms of this movement have emerged: the idea of construction of knowledge is ill defined, teachers

are inadequately trained in constructivist practices, and students are given excessive freedom from rules and consequences.

Construction of knowledge. Kozloff (1998) challenged the entire notion of student construction of knowledge and meaning. He contended that it makes no sense to say that humans construct meaning unless they are given adequate information and guidance from which to create meaning. Kozloff questions, when does constructing begin? Does it happen before one begins to think, before one acts, or afterwards? He further questions when it is that one gets the tools to construct knowledge and how one could do it without the tools. Kozloff contended that no one knows what counts as knowledge, construction, experience, or meaning.

According to Kozloff, it is clear that when observing a student interacting with an adult, the student believes that “how the world works and can be understood” is learned from the adult (p. 5). Kozloff asserted that the child’s future actions are modeled after the adults in their lives as they refine the propositions that they have observed. As a result, students cannot discover truths or verify propositions entirely on their own; they are only able to develop interpretations, and often times those interpretations are constrained by their teachers’ interpretations.

Kozloff argued that the constructivist teacher redefines students’ thinking based on the teacher’s own interpretation of constructed knowledge, not the students’. This argument challenges the theory by pointing out that even though the teacher’s role is to help students construct knowledge about their behavior and others’, develop reasons for rules and consequences, and become aware of the perceptions of others, the teacher must im-

plement activities to help students construct this knowledge. The teacher models what behaviors are appropriate, guides students toward acceptable rules, and shapes students' views of others. However, the students are not constructing knowledge apart from what the teacher models. If their knowledge is not parallel to that of the teachers, they are considered to be in error.

Lack of teacher training. Spatig (1996) contended that many constructivist teachers are given few concrete recommendations about how to implement constructivist practices. "As a result, some teachers shift away from tests and become more passive in guiding children toward specific learning goals" (p. 1). As a consequence, Spatig argued, regardless of how the teachers have been trained, constructivist practices might be harmful to students with limited means of acquiring cultural and academic knowledge. The focus is on creating a sociomoral environment, not on academics. Therefore, students may learn social and moral skills, but may be academically handicapped.

Brooks and Brooks (1999) stated that the curriculum within the constructivist classroom may be deficient, and students are less likely to learn the social and intellectual skills they need to be successful. This comes as a result, Brooks and Brooks contended, of the fact that constructivist teachers often abandon their curriculums to pursue the whims of their students. The concern here is that teachers may cast aside the information, facts, and basic skills necessary in a curriculum to pursue more capricious ideas. One factor that may contribute to such an outcome in some classrooms was pointed out by Pool (1997) and Darling-Hammond (1996). They argued that many teachers do not

know how to effectively implement a constructivist curriculum or develop a sociomoral environment.

Excessive freedom. Soar and Soar (1979) stated that within a constructivist classroom, students are allowed considerable freedom to move about in the classroom as they talk and work together. Soar et al. argued that this freedom should be minimized and advocated a more structured environment that is more conducive to learning. They concluded that too much freedom makes it difficult for students and teachers to work together and hinders the process of understanding each other's views of learning.

Where rules in constructivist classrooms exist, students are given the freedom to determine the rules and the consequences for classroom behavior. However, Davey (1994) argued that when students determine rules and consequences, they often look to blame someone else for the problem rather than trying to find a solution to the problem. To prevent this from happening, Davey suggested that the teacher must take on the role of an authoritarian and determine consistent rules and consequences that are applicable for all students.

Constructivist educators argued that constructivist practices are democratic, not permissive nor authoritarian. As problems arise, the teacher and students meet to discuss problems and to create solutions. In doing so, students develop feelings of necessity about rules, fairness, ownership, and shared responsibility. Students are given opportunities to be self-regulating, but they are not allowed to follow unrestrained and unsocialized impulses. Constructivist teachers help their students move from impulsivity to reflectivity (DeVries & Edmison, 1998).

As a result, students in a constructivist classroom show less aggression, more intellectual curiosity, and more complex and diverse ideas, and they exhibit interpersonal understanding and conflict resolution skills (DeVries & Zan, 2002). Constructivist educators concluded that students in constructivist classrooms are not allowed to do as they please, that they are in control, and that when students cannot regulate their behavior, the teacher firmly takes action (DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998; DeVries & Zan, 2002).

Summary

This section of literature review is important in order to build background information about the constructivist management plan and consider the research critically. Describing classroom practices, the role of the teacher, and rules within a constructivist classroom provides information needed to interpret data related to the research questions.

While supporters of constructivism claim that the constructivist approach has been shown to be effective in the area of students' attitude, efficacy, achievement, problem solving skills, and conflict resolution, detractors believe that the entire notion of student construction of knowledge and meaning is limited by the teacher's definition of knowledge. Further, the curriculum in a constructivist classroom may be deficient and academically harmful to children because of inadequate teacher training and excessive freedom given to students. As a result, the environment may be unstructured and not conducive for learning.

It is the purpose of this study to survey students regarding their views about constructivist methods in order to better understand what they view to be effective or ineffective.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the theoretical backgrounds of the Assertive Discipline and constructivist approaches to management. As it has examined factors that are affected by and factors that affect students' views of classroom management, it has addressed issues related to classroom environment, with particular emphasis on classroom practices, roles of the teacher, and establishment of classroom rules and consequences. In piecing together a description of the two types of classroom culture, each section has helped explain how students form self-beliefs as they engage in classroom interactions. Viewing the classroom from the perspective of the participants involved can reveal further information about classroom norms, consequences, self-control strategies, and appropriate and inappropriate student and teacher behaviors.

To address the lack of discipline in schools, examining the relationship between students' views about their teachers' management strategies and the students' ability to self-regulate may help teachers and researchers develop an understanding of what management strategies students view as effective. As a result, teachers may use this understanding to develop and adjust their approach to managing classroom behaviors.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to investigate students' views of classroom management within Assertive Discipline and constructivist classrooms. The findings in the literature review suggested that students' views are both positively and negatively affected by teachers' behaviors. The goal in the present study was to describe in detail the participating students' views of their teachers' classroom management techniques. This chapter describes the subjects, data collection procedures, purpose of analysis, and precautions taken in designing the procedures of this study to minimize potential biases from the researcher.

Subjects

The subjects included the teachers and students from two third grade classrooms: an Assertive Discipline classroom and a constructivist classroom. The two classrooms were similar in classroom ethnicity, class-size, and other demographic factors identified through an on-line data search and information provided by principals and teachers from the participating schools.

The Assertive Discipline classroom consisted of 23 students (11 males, 12 females). Fifteen students (7 males, 8 females) participated in the study. The Assertive Discipline teacher is a white female who has been implementing Assertive Discipline in a third grade classroom for the last four years. Her credentials include her training in Assertive Discipline management by the St. Louis, Missouri, school district, and her recommendation as a trained Assertive Discipline educator by the Missouri Department

of Education, the school's principal, and two co-workers trained in and utilizing Assertive Discipline in their classrooms.

The classroom is located in a pre-K-5th grade public school with 614 students. The student body is 98% Caucasian, and 51% receive free or reduced-price lunch. The school is located in a small Midwest community with a population of 5,849 residents.

The constructivist classroom consists of 18 students (9 males, 9 females). Nine students (4 males, 5 females) participated in the study. The constructivist teacher is a white male who has been actively participating in the implementation of constructivist practices in a third-grade classroom for the last four years. His credentials include his participation in constructivist education during a summer workshop, membership in the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education's Teacher Practitioner Council at the University of Northern Iowa, consultation with constructivist educators, and his recommendation as a trained constructivist educator by constructivist author and expert Dr. Rheta DeVries.

The classroom where constructivist education has been implemented is in a K-4th grade public school with 489 students. The student body is 100% Caucasian, and 28% receive free or reduced-price lunch. This school is located in a small Midwest community with a population of 5,469 residents.

Data Collection Procedures

Teachers and students in both classrooms were invited to participate in the study which was conducted during the second semester of the school year. Informed written consent, which fully explained the purpose of the study, was obtained following the

procedures established by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Northern Iowa (See Appendix A for student consent forms, Appendix B for teacher consent forms, and Appendix C for parent/guardian consent forms). Participants in the study were made aware that their participation was voluntary, that they were free to stop participating at any point, that their names would not be used in the study, and that their responses to the interview questions would not be shared with classmates or teachers (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The variety of methods used for gathering the data contributes to the trustworthiness of the findings (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This triangulation of procedures included use of classroom-selection instruments, videotaping, and in-depth interviews.

Classroom-Selection Instruments

To validate that the classrooms selected for the study were appropriate choices, the researcher used two instruments designed as qualitative rubrics to assess the programs prior to conducting the interviews. Both instruments were used in both classrooms to identify similar and contrasting information about teachers' behaviors and their implementation of the approach they preferred.

Assertive Discipline classroom instrument. Lee Canter Associates have not designed an Assertive Discipline classroom observation instrument. Therefore, to assess whether or not the Assertive Discipline classroom reflected the Assertive Discipline paradigm, the researcher developed an 80-item "Observation of Assertive Discipline Learning Environment" instrument using guidelines for elementary teachers as outlined in the following books: *Assertive Discipline: A Take Charge Approach for Today's Educator*

(Canter & Canter, 1983), *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom* (Canter & Canter, 1992), *Assertive Discipline: Elementary Workbook for Grades K-5* (Canter & Canter, 1992), and *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom* (Canter & Canter, 2002). This instrument includes three main categories: (a) utilizing a classroom discipline plan, which includes rules, positive recognition, and consequences, (b) teaching responsible behavior, and (c) building positive relationships (See Appendix D).

To ensure that the content of the instrument was compatible with the Canter's description of Assertive Discipline, the instrument was completed by four experienced teachers of Assertive Discipline at the elementary level and one elementary principal prior to its use in this study. Participants rated the implementation of specific elements of Assertive Discipline management and environmental elements using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (no evidence of implementation) to 5 (extensive evidence of implementation). Eighty percent of the responses indicated extensive evidence of the teachers successfully implementing components of the Assertive Discipline plan in the classroom.

Constructivist classroom instrument. To assess the implementation of constructivist education that reflects the social-cognitive paradigm, the 144-item Observation of Classroom Learning Environment Scale designed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (1995) was used. This instrument was based on Piaget's developmental theory with an emphasis on its constructivist and interactionist elements. The instrument was developed to identify constructivist kindergarten

classroom learning environments and has been used to evaluate the effects of constructivist pedagogy (Pfannenstiel & Schattgen, 1997; Project Construct, 1992). Specific categories in this instrument include teaching practices, student engagement in learning, students' development toward autonomy, and classroom environment. Responses range from 1 (no evidence of implementation) to 5 (extensive evidence of implementation) (See Appendix E).

Videotaping

To expand upon the findings of the classroom instruments, a research assistant videotaped a full day in each classroom to illustrate the application of each philosophy in practical terms. The day chosen for videotaping was one on which students were not scheduled for additional specials outside their regular class (such as art, physical education, and/or music classes). Videotaping added information needed to answer the research questions and provided examples of classroom norms, types of consequences teachers use for inappropriate behaviors, management strategies enabling students to show self-control, and teachers' and students' interactions throughout an entire day. From the videotapes, field notes were written by the researcher to record observations in these categories. The field notes also provided a record of actual behaviors that were compared to descriptions gathered in interviews with the teachers and students. The combination of field notes and interviews provided a broad contextual picture of students' views of their teachers' classroom management.

Interviews

To protect against potential biases, in-depth interviews with the Assertive Discipline and constructivist teachers and all participating students were conducted by an interviewer who was blind to class type and who had 13 years of experience in interviewing and working with adults and students. Each subject wore a wireless microphone during the interview and interviews were audiotaped. Student identities were kept confidential.

To gain in-depth understanding of teachers' theoretical beliefs about classroom management and students' views of their teachers' management methods and behaviors, student interviews and teacher interviews were developed using question categories similar to those defined in DeVries, Reese-Learned, et al's. (1991) study with kindergarteners. This study tabulated students' reports about types of classroom rules, reasons for these rules, who makes the rules, and what teachers do and say when rules are broken. An additional category of teacher behavior has been added to this instrument.

Student interviews. The interview questions for students were piloted with 18 third-grade students to ensure developmentally appropriate wording and to reveal any additional areas of the interview instruments needing refinement. Interviews examined students' views of classroom rules, classroom consequences, their own ability to develop self-control, and teachers' behaviors when encountering confrontational situations (See Appendix F). The in-depth interviewing was semi-structured and focused on concrete examples and feelings. The open-ended questions were adjusted based on the students' understanding and need for clarification (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Eisner, 1998).

Students were asked to avoid discussion of the interview with classmates. Each interview lasted from thirty to thirty-five minutes.

Students were interviewed in focus groups outside their own classroom, in an empty room in the school building. The teacher divided the students into focus groups of three to four members each. The teacher was also responsible for sending each focus group to the interview room when one group had finished their interviews and had returned back to the room. The groupings ensured that students were placed in groups that displayed similar characteristics, such as their ability to collaboratively work together.

The use of focus groups was important in this study to accomplish the following goals:

1. encouraging interaction among and between group members;
2. generating thicker description in answers to interview questions;
3. bringing out students' personal experiences; and
4. placing emphasis on students' viewpoints (Berg, 1998).

Students were interviewed two different times. The first session was conducted by the interviewer/research assistant. The researcher then reviewed the questions and answers, looking for in-depth responses that would aid in answering the research questions. The researcher then returned to each classroom the following day and interviewed each focus group for a second time. During each session, each interviewer was mindful of limiting the conversation to topics pertinent to the study (Berg, 1998).

Teacher interviews. The interview questions for teachers were piloted with 4 third-grade teachers to ensure appropriate wording and refinement of the interview

instruments. Interviews examined teachers' theoretical beliefs about classroom management, methods and approaches they use to develop rules, types of consequences used for inappropriate behavior, strategies implemented to help students learn self-control, and reflections about their own relationships with students (see Appendix G).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that during the process of researching classroom environments, teachers should participate in the inquiry by sharing their reflections through the interview process. Therefore, teachers were invited to interview after the classroom observations were used and before the student interviews took place. Because the interviews were semi-structured, teachers had the freedom to provide additional information after each question if they chose. As a result, the interviewer and teachers worked together to build an understanding of classroom management and the theoretical bases that come into play when they deal with student behavior. Each interview lasted approximately two hours in order for the interviewer to have time to talk freely, ask questions for clarification, and ask for examples that explained the participants' points of view.

Analysis

Qualitative research methodology was essential in realizing the purpose of the study. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding behavior from the subject's view (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998); is supported by the interpretive paradigm, which pertains to subjects' ability to explain why something is taking place within their environment and within themselves (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992); and provides data that is "rich in

description of people, places, and conversations” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 2).

Therefore, the data collection methods provided opportunities for

1. Describing how each classroom is designed and organized, revealing environmental factors that suggested how students are supposed to behave (Eisner, 1998) and the theoretical constructs that define the classroom (Allen, 1986).
2. Attaining emergent, information-rich meanings as students described their views of their world within the classroom (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), and collecting observations, interpretations, inferences, hypotheses, and conclusions about those views (Eisner, 1998; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).
3. Discovering themes and relationships in the views expressed by the students in each classroom (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

DataSense, LLC, an organization that offers qualitative data analysis services, and the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim and coded the collected data using the qualitative software Nvivo. The collected data was then sorted into major categories based upon the interview questions, with additional sorting by classroom philosophy and other organizing principles. To demonstrate the relationship between the interview questions and the responses generated, the questions were chosen as the major organizing scheme for reporting the data in Chapter 4 and 5. The researcher continued to refine and break the data down into subcategories in order to identify themes within the data generated from each research question. The researcher then reviewed and interpreted all data for reporting in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was undertaken to explore third grade students' thinking about their teachers' classroom management strategies. Chapter 4 presents the findings gathered from all the data-gathering methods used in the study: the classroom instruments, interviews with students and teachers, videotapes, and classroom observations. Before the findings from these data sources are presented, a brief description of the Assertive Discipline and constructivist classrooms will be shared. Chapter 4 describes student views of the two classroom settings. The information presented in this chapter addresses Research Questions 1, 2, and 3, comparing third grade students' views of their teachers' classroom management strategies within the two classroom types. The responses generated from student interviews are organized according to the interview questions, then summarized in comparison tables.

Specific interview questions are presented in numbered list form, including any follow-up probes asked if the interview questions were not discussed in adequate depth (see Appendix F). These follow-up questions are identified as (a), (b), etc. under each interview question. Where more than one student's responses are presented, comments appear in dialogue form with spacing between each comment. When one respondent's remarks are used to illustrate a particular finding, block quote format is used. Implications of the findings will follow each section.

According to the research reviewed in Chapter 2, the classroom environment

influences students' awareness of classroom management strategies. Several significant findings in this study support the research. Students' awareness, beliefs, and views are rooted in their environment, and factors that influence their development also influence how they act and play a critical role in how classroom standards of behavior are set and communicated.

The Assertive Discipline Classroom

Every time I walked into the Assertive Discipline classroom, the students looked at me and smiled. I greeted them with a smile in return. The students then looked at their teacher to see if she noticed that I had come in. She always did. Whatever the teacher was doing in the room, she stopped and walked over to me to see if I needed anything. The students always sat quietly at their desks and continued working on whatever they had been assigned to do. I felt very welcome in this classroom.

The classroom was bright and clean. The floor tiles and walls were white and the room was lit by large fluorescent lights located behind ceiling tiles. There were three large windows on one side of the classroom. Trees and the playground outside were visible from these windows.

It was easy to get around in the classroom. The teacher had arranged the desks in straight rows, which faced the front of the room with an aisle between each student desk. Instead of a blackboard in front of the room, a whiteboard covered the length of the wall. The teacher's desk was at the back of the room. She mentioned that she placed it there so that she can monitor students' behavior.

In addition to the arrangement of desks, the teacher had decided to store all materials such as tape, paper, glue and learning manipulatives in cupboards. The teacher said that she set up the classroom in this manner to “limit the distractions students may otherwise be drawn to so that they could focus on their work instead of other things.” The teacher also said she believed that student work displayed on the walls would distract their learning, so she had posted only the rules and card system on a bulletin board by the door. She wanted her students to focus on their academic work and to concentrate on what she was doing rather than on their peers and other things in the classroom that might interrupt their learning.

In one of the corners of the room, away from the door and desks, the teacher had set up a small library of books which were housed on a mobile cart for students to read during their free time. During the observation, the students were given ten minutes for free reading time. They seemed to really enjoy this time as they searched through the books and read them quietly at their desks. The books were put into plastic tubs with students’ names on the outside of them. Only those students whose names were on the tubs could use the books in that particular tub. The teacher said,

I choose books at the appropriate reading level for the students whose names are on the tubs. In this way, they can be successful at reading during free time. I also try to choose books that are interesting to the students.

The responses from the teacher’s interview provides strong evidence that she is knowledgeable and skillful in designing a classroom for student learning through direct instruction, a method the Canters (2002) supported in their writings. She said that

by limiting the distractions so students can finish their tasks, they are able to focus on the classroom rules such as keeping hands, feet, and objects to themselves and

following all directions. It also discourages them from talking to their neighbor, and helps them focus on the lessons taught.

According to the teacher, she stated that she believes that the Assertive Discipline classroom is one where the teacher is the boss and students can be controlled through using rewards for appropriate behavior and punishment for inappropriate behavior. She also believes that Assertive Discipline is an effective program for managing student behaviors as it has worked in the past and that it seems to be working well this year.

The Constructivist Classroom

As I walked into the constructivist classroom during the morning of each visit, I was greeted by the teacher, who was sitting on a stool by the door, greeting and shaking hands with each of his students as they went into their classroom. They walked to the front of the room to a poster chart on which the teacher had written the agenda for the day. The students read the agenda and then proceeded to get their supplies ready for the day. The teacher had arranged the desks in groups of four so students could easily work together cooperatively. There was no teacher's desk in the room. There was a reading area that was supplied with a couch, overstuffed pillows, and stuffed animals. Another area was set aside for large group activities. Several types of live animals, plants, games, lamps, area rugs, and a stereo were placed at students' reach. Students had access to all materials in the classroom.

The manner in which the constructivist classroom was set up provided strong evidence that the teacher was knowledgeable and skillful in designing a classroom in which learning could take place and where cooperation between teacher and students was emphasized, a criterion DeVries and Zan (1994) supported in their writings. According to

the teacher, he stated that he believed in setting the classroom up to create a democratic environment that emphasizes student collaboration, conferencing, and provides opportunities for them to develop personal autonomy over their own behavior. He said “I try to provide students the opportunity to help structure and maintain this type of environment.”

Student Interviews

The student interviews clearly indicated that students’ experiences in the classrooms closely parallel descriptions of the respective classroom types from the Canters (1976, 2001) and DeVries and Zan (1994), and they are consistent with what the classroom instruments indicated about the structure of each classroom.

Classroom Rules

Seven questions were asked to give students opportunities to describe their understanding of the rules and consequences for breaking the rules in their classroom.

1. Tell me about the rules in your classroom.

(a) What are the rules in your classroom?

Assertive Discipline focus groups. According to Canter and Canter (1976, 1992, 2001), classroom rules should apply to behavior only and not address academic or homework issues. Further, no more than five rules should be established in the classroom. The Assertive Discipline management approach used in the third grade classroom in this study emphasized firm limits and directed students’ attention toward appropriate behavior. Consistent with Canter and Canter’s recommendation, no more than five rules had been posted on a bulletin board by the door so all students could view

them. The five rules were (a) Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself; (b) Raise your hand before talking; (c) Follow directions; (d) Use appropriate language and behavior; and (e) Be respectful to the students and the teacher. When the students were asked to describe their classroom rules, they expanded on the posted list:

Don't raise your hand while the teacher is talking. Raise your hand to sharpen your pencil, go to the bathroom, get help, get a tissue, get a drink, or to ask a question. If you talk when the teacher is talking, you'll get in trouble.

Do all assessments like assignments.

Be respectful to the students and the teacher. Don't pinch, no cussing, no teasing, no fighting, no kicking, no biting, no standing up and moving around. It has to be an emergency to get out of your seat without permission like having a bloody nose.

Keep hands and feet to yourself. Be nice to each other. Follow directions. Use appropriate language and behavior. Don't say bad words, and behave when the teacher's talking.

Don't make any noise or anything if you're done with the times test and other people aren't. Never talk while the teacher is talking. So you then listen and hear what she says. Do the Give Me Five rules. We have the Give Me Five thing since kindergarten. The Give Me Five rules are like hands and feet to yourself, eyes on the speaker when they're talking, use appropriate language, follow directions, and be respectful to students and the teacher.

The Constructivist focus groups. According to DeVries and Zan (1994), rules within a constructivist classroom are developed and discussed in partnership between the teacher and students. Suggestions for rules governing appropriate and inappropriate behaviors are listed and discussed with explanations for the purpose of those rules. In addition, all members of the focus groups, including the teacher, discussed their responsibilities as part of the classroom. The constructivist students were given the same opportunities to share information about their classroom rules as Assertive Discipline students were,

beginning with a general description of the rules themselves. One student explained,

One of our rules is when we first come in to the room, we shake hands with our teacher. And that's what we call an H. An H is a handshake or high five. Then there's the attendance table over there. In the morning, when you come into the classroom we sign in for attendance. It's just kind of easier for him to tell that you're here so he can just look. And if you didn't sign in, then he knows that that person's gone. But some people forget and the teacher reminds us but if you forget too many times, you've got to stay in and practice. There's just a couple who forget. Those students who do not sign in, the teacher makes a comment such as, "Wow, there are a lot of people gone today."

During the observation, the teacher made the comment mentioned in the student's description ("Wow . . ."), and those students who had not signed in immediately went over to sign in. The teacher did not single anyone out by calling out names, nor did he lecture those who forgot. Students also talked about the morning greeting and the classroom procedure in which everyone is expected to share. They explained,

After we sign in, then we do a greeting and share. We play the game Hot Potato and the last person who has the ball, shares first. We sit on the same stool the teacher used as he greeted everyone that morning. We share a joy, concern, or celebration.

Another rule students mentioned in the interviews was following classroom agreements. A student said, "There's three different sheets. There's one that tells the teacher how he should treat us and stuff. And then there's one sheet that lists what it means to be a good student. And another one for being a good class." Students mentioned three specific categories of behavior pertaining to being a good class:

Speaking without raising their hands, understanding levels of cooperation, and fixing problems. One rule is that we don't raise our hands. Our teacher doesn't want us to raise our hands 'cause he thinks it's not fair because he might always call on one of the students. The other students would think that the teacher calls on them because he likes them. So he takes his turn and he makes it as fair as possible.

Our levels of cooperation are on a chart that says D, C, B, and A. Those are our

levels of cooperation. That's the way we're acting. Sometimes he asks us what the whole class is, what our level of cooperation is. And sometimes it's just individual. D is the highest level. It is Democracy. That's when you do something right, but you don't want a reward. And you're doing what you're supposed to be doing.

Students offered some explanations and examples of Level D behavior:

It's just the right thing to do.

Not running around in the classroom or like wrestling and no screaming.

Don't talk when other people are talking.

Descriptions of Levels C, B, and A behavior included the following:

Then there was C, which is the second best. That you're doing something for a reward. Like we're doing something good to get like a thank-you or a reward or something.

And then B is bossy and bothering. You're not doing what you're supposed to do.

A is anarchy. Anarchy means like you're out of control or you're hurting someone. It means when you're like messing around and just going all over the place and running around and stuff like that.

A student noted that "the teacher doesn't tell us what level of cooperation we are at. We have to pick the ones we are doing and discover that for ourselves."

The classroom observation presented several opportunities to see how students assess their own cooperation level. The teacher would stop periodically and ask students what their level was. Twice, students said "anarchy." During these periods, no students were observed to be doing anything inappropriate at their desks or running around the room. In fact, many students were walking around, but appeared to be busy, and the room was fairly quiet. However, students apparently thought that they could be doing a better job of learning.

Students mentioned a few additional rules for avoiding or fixing problems in

specific classroom situations. Students described how they were taught to fix a problem. One rule is that when we have a problem, we have to try to fix it. Lots of times we use the I-message or do the Decision game. When we have a decision like when we're in fights, we do a decision game. We do rock, paper, scissors or ask another person to put a number in a bag and whoever's the closest gets to do that thing. Or we roll a dice. Whoever gets the highest number decides what to do. And that's pretty much what a decision game is. The teacher taught us how to do it. He was the first one.

Listen to the speaker.

During reading, we only have one person read at a time.

When we don't understand something, we have the rule "three" so before we ask our teacher, we have to ask three friends or three classmates.

When our teacher has to leave the room, a person is in charge and then when our teacher comes back, he asks the person who did stuff.

When the teacher left the room for a few minutes during the observation, the students kept on working as if he was still in the room. No one "messed around" or went off task.

As Table 1 shows, the similarities in rules within each classroom became evident during conversations with the students and revealed a theme in their responses: an emphasis on being respectful to others and to the teacher and on listening when someone else is talking. However, one interesting finding that was unexpected was that students in the Assertive Discipline classroom defined *respectful* as following the rules of the classroom.

Table 1

Comparison of Rules in the Two Classrooms

| Assertive Discipline Classroom Rules | Constructivist Classroom Rules | Similarities |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| Don't raise hands when teacher is talking | Don't raise hands ever | Listen to the person talking |
| Always raise hand to ask a question or make a comment | Before going into class, shake hands with or give a high-five to the teacher | |
| Do all assignments | Sign in before class begins | |
| No pinching, cussing, teasing, fighting, kicking, or standing around | One person at a time read in large group | |
| Follow the Give Me Five Rules: | If there's a problem, fix it. Use: | |
| 1. Keep hands and feet to self | 1. Levels of Cooperation | Be respectful of others |
| 2. Keep eyes on speaker | 2. I-Messages | |
| 3. Use appropriate language | 3. Decision Game | |
| 4. Follow directions | 4. Rule Three Rule | |
| 5. Be nice to each other | 5. Classroom Agreements | |

One focus group in the Assertive Discipline classroom commented that “we need to follow the classroom rules because that is showing respect to the teacher and to each other.” In contrast to the Assertive Discipline students’ list of behaviors to do, the students in the constructivist classroom defined the term as “fixing a problem” and listed procedures they should use to *determine* what to do. All focus groups commented that learning to get along was important to them and that when something doesn’t work out, they needed to find out how to do it better.

These findings point out two major differences in students' classroom experiences related to raising their hands and following rules for appropriate classroom behavior. For example, in the Assertive Discipline classroom, students felt that they could not interrupt their teacher while she was teaching or get out of their seats unless they raised their hands and received permission from the teacher to do so; otherwise, they would be punished. In the constructivist classroom, students understood that the teacher did not want them to raise their hands. The teacher believed that this rule would give all students a fair chance to answer questions and contribute to discussions. Students viewed this rule as important so that everyone would have the opportunity to voice their opinions. In addition, students were able to move around at any time without the teacher's permission.

The second difference is how students learn the rules for appropriate behavior. The Assertive Discipline students indicated that rules were communicated directly, and that this let students know exactly what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable. In this classroom, the rules govern how students should conduct themselves. According to student responses, observation, and field notes, there is little opportunity for these students to discuss the reasons for the rules.

The findings suggested a different theme in the responses of the students in the constructivist classroom: that of behavior issues as something to be dealt with more collaboratively. These students were given the opportunity to figure out the underlying reasons for rules and how to fix problems themselves. Based on these findings, one may argue that when students are given the opportunity to discuss with the teacher what

motivated them to act inappropriately, they understand that there are consequences to inappropriate behaviors and that their inappropriate behavior impacts others. For example, in the constructivist classroom, an inappropriate behavior was seen as someone who continually forgot to follow through with a required classroom procedure, such as forgetting to sign in for attendance. Those who forgot would be subjective to a punishment of staying in for recess “to practice.” This punishment was a consequence in response to their inappropriate behavior that was not negotiable. Perhaps one may assume that using some form of punishment is necessary in response to certain behaviors teachers feel that inappropriate and that to some degree, effect others.

An additional question was asked.

(b) Why are there rules in your classroom?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. These students offered several explanations for why they believed there were rules to follow in the classroom. For example, one student said,

So you don't miss out on directions and you listen and hear what she says that you have to do. She doesn't want a lot of kids coming up to her at the same time when she's working with another person. She can't understand all of us talking at the same time. If there weren't rules, we'd get pretty loud and everyone would just be jumping around and running around the classroom.

At one point in the observation, the teacher did mention to the students that she wanted them to listen very carefully so that they would not miss any of the directions given during a spelling test as she would not repeat any them a second time.

The Constructivist focus groups. Students explained the need for rules in terms of

avoiding negative situations and creating positive benefits:

Student 1: To keep kids in class

Student 2: So that nobody gets hurt.

Student 3: So our class is good.

Student 4: So we can improve. Like our positive attitudes have gotten better.

One of the positive benefits, self-improvement, was discussed at more length by one student:

We're on a self-evaluation and we mark down what we think, how we're doing and then from the teacher he marks down an area that you ought to improve. But you feel you're doing well and then he marks an area to improve and you feel a little disappointed. And then after you're done improving, you're just thinking, I really did improve and you feel better.

The observation and videotaping allowed for opportunities to observe the teacher guiding student improvement. The teacher, along with a student, wrote down in a journal their thoughts about how the student could improve. The teacher planned to respond to the student's comments and together, they would work on alternative ways for the student to work on self-improvement. They would schedule a meeting time so the teacher could check up on the student's progress and then reassess strategies for improvement.

Based on the findings, the primary theme present in the Assertive Discipline students' discussion about rules is the teacher's need to keep better control over the classroom structure, which helps her to teach better (Table 2). This view directly reflects the classroom instrument and the Canters' description of teaching responsible behavior. Furthermore, the findings substantiate the notion that Assertive Discipline students view following the rules as something they have to do to avoid consequences.

Table 2

Students' Explanations for the Presence of Rules in their Classrooms

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|---|--------------|
| So that everyone can hear directions | To keep kids in class | |
| To limit students from going up to teacher's desk | So no one gets hurt | |
| So the teacher can talk to the whole class without any interruptions | So the class is good | |
| To control noise | So we can improve our work one person at a time | |
| To keep everyone in their seats | So we can self-evaluate | |

In contrast, the findings indicate that the students in the constructivist classroom believe that following the rules is important for more personal reasons. Students believe these rules help them to develop satisfying peer relationships. It is safe to assume that these students believe that the rules are used as tools to help them become better people and learners and that by following the rules, they learn to get along with each other and learn self-control. The ideas expressed by the constructivist students are also compatible with the classroom instrument, in that the constructivist instrument describes the type of learning environment that supports the development of autonomy.

Two additional follow-up questions were asked. During this phase of the questioning, I sought to learn whether rule making in this classroom was primarily teacher-directed, or accomplished with student input.

2. Who makes the rules in the classroom?

(a) Do students ever get to make the rules?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. All of these students said that the teacher makes the rules in the classroom and that the rules are made before they come to school on the first day of school. When students were asked whether or not they get to make rules, each student answered emphatically: “No;” “Nope;” “The teacher reads the rules off to us at the beginning of school.” Students were aware that they did not have input into developing the structure of the classroom, rules, or daily routines. They said, “The teacher has everything planned before the first day and that’s how all teachers do it.”

The Constructivist focus groups. During the conversations with the constructivist students, one student, remembering back to the beginning of the course, explained, “The teacher taught us all this stuff about making rules in the beginning of the year.” When asked again if the class helped to actually make any of the rules, a student responded, “The whole class did. Like a committee for the party. We vote on that and somebody rolls the dice to make a decision.” Students’ next comments did not relate directly to rules, but they did provide examples of their participation in shaping the class in other ways. Students said,

The whole class also makes agreements. We made it on the first week of school. The agreements are like we decided on what makes a good teacher. We thought about other years we had good teachers and we said that Mr. Hutton could do what they did to be a good teacher. We made a list.

After we got lots of things, we voted on ‘em by using sticky things. We had three, four, five sticky things. And then we put them beside the things on the chart we liked best. Whichever ones had the most sticky things would be on the list.

Students went through the same process in developing a list of characteristics that make a good class and a good student. One final example of their participation was coming up with a name for the group. They explained,

We also made our class name. Everyone had a part in making the class name. Our class name is Fantaculars. We thought of all these cool names that nobody else has ever thought of in his class. We voted. We vote on a lot of things.

(b) How do you learn what the rules are in the classroom?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Two focus groups mentioned the posting of rules for students to see every day:

We do have this poster in our room that says “Give Me Five.” Those are our rules. All we have to do is read it.

The teacher would give us a rule chart. Well, not exactly a chart. It’s kind of a poster that says rules. It has like just five or so rules on it.

The students noted that the teacher may not rely on the presence of visuals alone to communicate rules, noting that “The teacher reads the rules off to us at the beginning of school.” Many students agreed with the classmate who commented, “The teacher would tell us what would happen if we broke the rules.” Another student offered a specific example:

Sometimes the teacher tells the rules. Like if we’re chewing gum, she’ll tell us to spit the gum out in the trash can cause you’re not supposed to have gum. If we do it again, we’ll get in trouble. We’d lose five minutes.

Students also said that they could talk to other students or ask the teacher about rules.

It is important to note that another important method of learning rules students mentioned was their prior experience with school. One student noted, “We should know because we’ve been in school for four years.”

The Constructivist focus groups. These students answered the probe by stating that

they had observed that rules were communicated to them directly by the teacher. They said,

You can learn 'em from the teacher 'cause he can tell you what to do. And he does a lot of stuff with us. He mostly gets some of the stuff from other places. Then when he comes to us, he gets our ideas and then that's how we have a greeting and stuff. He spends a lot of time at the start of the year talking about these things.

(c) How do students learn to follow the rules if the teacher does not tell them and they aren't sure what to do?

During the interviews, in order to get a detailed response to this question, the research assistant presented a scenario in which a new student comes into the classroom and does not know what the rules of the classroom are. The student would not know how to act or what the expectations for behavior in the classroom environment are. The students were asked how they would suggest the student should go about learning the rules.

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Students suggested ways of figuring out the rules and at the same time indicated what the consequences might be if rules aren't followed. They said,

Maybe you could remember from your old school. Most of the time you know what the rules are.

Ask the teacher. If you don't know the rules, you'll get into trouble.

Find someone who knows what they are. If you didn't have a friend, then you can go ask someone that you don't even know who their name is and ask them.

Well, like you would look up at this one like little chart type thing and it says our classroom rules on it. And you could read the rules off, like off the chart.

Well, see if there are little charts up in their room. You look at it and it has one, two, three, four, and five. And you have to look at those and follow those rules, too. And she also lets you have a little sheet of paper that has rules on that.

You could just look around and see if somebody's doing something or something like that. Pay attention.

You either get your card pulled or you get your name on the board. You get one warning. Some people will tell them that if they have their name on the board, then if they get their name on the board a second time, they pull their card.

In addition, some students mentioned the part they might play in getting other students to observe the rules:

Sometimes, you'll be like, "Sshh, be quiet so we can get more cotton balls."

I'd tell them that that's not right and tell them to stop. And then if they don't once the teacher gets back or something like that, then tell the teacher what they've been doing. I'd tell them to stop acting up.

The Constructivist focus groups. Students mentioned classroom agreements as an extension of the teacher's instruction about rules. They said,

We follow the agreements. Classroom agreements, hallway agreements, and our expectations.

Another important source of information, according to the students, is watching or asking peers what to do.

If they go to another class, sometimes you just watch other kids. You ask 'em.

Sometimes you make new friends and then they'll tell you.

Sometimes you can ask your teacher.

You can ask the person who you are sitting by.

When asked if they are a little afraid of the consequences if they break rules, a

student responded that it was “weird because you just don’t know what you’re doing and what you’re supposed to be doing,” but getting to know other kids and getting information from them took care of the problem.

Table 3

Students’ Understanding of Who Makes Classroom Rules

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|---|---|--------------|
| <i>(a) Do students ever get to make the rules? If so, how do the students make rules in your classroom? (teacher-directed, student input)</i> | | |
| No. The teacher does. | Discuss as a whole classroom Work with a committee to make rules, then vote. Make teacher agreements Make student agreements | |
| <i>(b) How do you learn what the rules are in the classroom?</i> | | |
| Teacher reads them at the beginning of the year and hands out a Give Me Five rule chart | Students have agreements written on a piece of paper that is taped to the top of their desk | |
| Teacher talks about consequences | The teacher asks students what their level of cooperation is and they all talk about it | |
| Students experience consequences | Students talk about how they want their classroom to be, write them on a chart, vote on them, and then post the chart on the wall | |
| Students ask another student or the teacher | | |
| <i>(a) How do you learn to follow the rules if the teacher does not tell you</i> | | |
| Remember them from another school | | |
| Ask the teacher or a someone else | Ask someone | Ask someone |
| Look at the rule chart | | |
| By getting name on the board and card pulled | | |
| Pay attention | | |

Table 3 indicates students' responses to questions regarding their participation in rule making. The Assertive Discipline students' comments suggested that they believed the procedures in place were the best way to run the classroom, and there was nothing they could add. When asked if they had the opportunity to participate, they used an adamant tone when they answered either "no" or "nope." I was struck by the tone of voice students in the Assertive Discipline classroom used to answer the question. They were very matter-of-fact and did not provide much explanation with their responses. At this point, I was reminded of their teacher's interview responses, as she answered in like manner.

It is clear that the students' responses align with Canter and Canter's (1976, 2001) advocacy of teacher-created rules with little to no student input, and for students learning the rules at the beginning of the year. This way, the rules stay consistent no matter what the situation, do not change throughout the course of the year, and do not have to be retaught.

The students in the constructivist classroom elaborated on and discussed their views regarding what and how rules were made and what their input had been in making the rules. Their responses concur with what DeVries and Zan (1994, 2002) advocated: that the teacher share power with students whenever possible and involve them in the rule-making process. In contrast to the Assertive Discipline classroom, they mentioned that if some rule needed to be changed or a new rule added during the year, they would have a class meeting and discuss it and then vote on it. These responses were delivered passionately in wording and vocal emphasis compared to student responses in the

Assertive Discipline classroom, possibly *because* students are included in making the rules.

3. Does the teacher talk with students about what to do when there are problems in the classroom?

(a) What does your teacher say?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Canter and Canter (1976, 2001) stated that assertive teachers' responses should be positive, direct students' attention toward appropriate behavior, and recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior immediately.

During the classroom observation, the teacher did not talk with the students about problems in the classroom. She did call out the name of the student who was displaying inappropriate behavior and recorded his name on the board. Some of the comments made by the students, however, indicate that the teacher does talk to them about their behavior.

For example, the Assertive Discipline students said,

Sometimes the teacher will remind students of the problem or will ask them what the problem is. The teacher says, "Don't talk when the teacher's talking." We have big problems with that.

Sometimes she'll just take the student out into the hallway and talk to them.

Other students indicated that statements made by the teacher were not always very supportive. They said,

She gives us a really big lecture on not to do that. That everyone should be paying attention. Um, you know what to do. Try to be better next time.

The teacher sometimes says that, "If I were you, I wouldn't be doing that cause you might get into more trouble. Don't do it again 'cause you should know what not to do."

Well sometimes, like if somebody gets up and like she will say, “You guys, you know the rules. You’re not supposed to get up when we’re doing this kind of activity.

If two kids get in a fight and it’s a big, big, big problem. Like if it’s like a humongous problem she yells, “You guys, you need to be quiet ‘cause we’re trying to learn and we’d have to put a noise box up on the board. If it’s not a real huge problem, she won’t talk. She’ll just ignore it.”

For some students, it didn’t matter what the teacher said. One student said,

If you weren’t paying attention, then she gets on to you. And you’re like what the heck!

Finally, some students noticed that the teacher doesn’t necessarily recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior immediately.

Sometimes she doesn’t know what everyone is doing in the classroom. Maybe she needed to be watching that person. She needs to know what they do most of the time because they do it like a lot. And she likes to keep her eyes on certain people. And then sometimes you need to tell her so that she can keep her eyes on another person.

The Constructivist focus groups. Students said that the teacher “asks about our level of cooperation and asks if we can fix the problem or do we need help.” They reported that the teacher is sometimes more specific. According to one student, He might say, “It sounds like you need to go to the Peace Chair to talk about the problem.” Then he’ll ask us how we think we can handle the problem and sometimes we have a class meeting. We all talk about it if there is a problem in the classroom.

During the classroom observation, the teacher did talk to the students about their level of cooperation and how they could be a more democratic classroom. He, the teacher, also helped the students brainstorm solutions for solving problems such as not cooperating with each other. During the course of the day, he also went to the Peace Chair with two students who seemed to have a problem with not doing equal amount of work when put in cooperative groups.

Table 4

Teachers' Methods of Dealing with Problems in the Classroom

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|---|--------------|
| <i>a) What does your teacher say when someone breaks a rule?</i> | | |
| Ignore the behavior if it's not a big deal | Asks about our level of cooperation | |
| "You know what to do." | Asks if a class meeting is needed | |
| "Try to be better next time." | "Can you fix the problem, or do you need help?" | |
| "If I were you, I wouldn't be doing that because you might get into more trouble." | "It sounds like you need to go to the Peace Chair." | |
| "Don't do it again 'cause you know what not to do." | | |
| "You guys know the rules." | | |
| "You guys need to be quiet 'cause we're trying to learn." | | |

During the classroom observation, the Assertive Discipline teacher did not make any of the comments the students mentioned in the interviews, comments summarized in Table 4. Instead, she used non-verbal facial expressions, which seemed to redirect off-task students. She also put names on the board without explanation to students for doing so. This technique is an example of what the classroom instrument says about using corrective actions for inappropriate behaviors.

One important theme to emerge from an analysis of the interviews and observations was potential inconsistency between stated rules and rule enforcement. One classroom behavior the teacher ignored was students getting out of their seats during individual

work, even though students had stated in the interview that this was not permitted. It can be assumed that any lack of rule enforcement may be confusing to students, especially if the teacher is inconsistent in reinforcing the rule or its consequence. If the teacher ignores a student's actions, then other students may pattern their behavior accordingly. Yet, they may break the rules while at the same time experiencing fear due to not knowing when and if they will receive a consequence for doing so.

During the observation, the constructivist teacher used all the techniques students mentioned, with the exception of asking them if they wanted to have a classroom meeting. Because the students frequently mentioned having classroom meetings, it is safe to assume that the strategy is used on a regular basis. The teacher used nonverbal cues throughout this observation, including raised eyebrows, close proximity, and receptive body language. He asked open-ended questions that asked the students to consider their responsibility for their own behavior. This strategy is a direct reflection of what the classroom instrument indicates about encouraging students to interact with others.

4. Are the rules fair for everyone?

(a) What is an example of rules that are fair?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. The Canters (1976, 2001) stated that the rules in an Assertive Discipline classroom should be fair, should be consistent throughout the school day and school year, and should define limits of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. During the interview, all students expressed the belief that what the teacher did

in the classroom was fair and the rules were easy to follow. Students in the Assertive Discipline focus groups mentioned the card system, cotton ball jar, and noise box as examples of methods that showed the fairness of the rules. They said,

Yes, the rules are fair because they help us try to work better and pay attention.

The Card System is fair because I would not like the people talking out loud when I'm talking to the teacher or if there's a person on the intercom where I could hear the other person. The Card System helps everyone be quiet. When the cards are pulled, it helps us not be hyper.

Using the Cotton ball jar is fair because it helps us to try to work better and pay attention. But we'd like to earn more cotton balls. We get cotton balls only when everyone gets their work done when we're suppose to or if we are quiet in the hallway.

The noise box is fair so we can be quiet and listen. But it doesn't always keep the class quieter. Only sometimes. Not all of the time.

A key part of these students' definition of "fair" was knowing what they had to do to prevent negative consequences. A student commented, "We think the rules are fair. But most of us, we follow the rules so we don't get in trouble or anything or have to go up to the principal."

The Constructivist focus groups. Students gave an example of a situation in which the teacher acted fairly when a boy lost his moneybag which had his Hutton money in. They said, "He said that somebody stole it out of his desk and so the teacher paid him because it wasn't his fault. And then our teacher Mr. Hutton found it. So the money had to go back into the bank." The constructivist students' definition of fairness seemed to focus on avoiding false accusations, and in addition, making decisions without unnecessary conflict.

A specific rule these students thought was fair was when they played the Decision

Game, which the whole class plays during content learning or when a conflict arises. The Decision Game was played during the observation, which provided support for the students' responses. During the game, the students had to decide who would be first to share a joy, concern, or celebration, so the students listed names of students who had something to share. They then voted. Whoever had the most votes shared first. Students thought this game contributed to fair decision-making. Two focus groups explained why they thought so:

The Decision Game makes things fair because it's easier than just fighting. When we have a problem, we do the decision game and the teacher makes it fair. He'll tell you to be fair. It's fair because we agree to play a game to help us make a decision and then we have to follow that decision. If we disagree on how to do something the decision game helps us decide. That's an example.

Making it clear that the game encourages fairness on the teacher's part and on their own, the third focus group said the following:

The teacher will tell you to be fair so we don't learn the easy stuff. There's some people that don't know the stuff that we already know so they go in another group with him and that's how he does some of the fair stuff.

Here are some additional examples all groups gave of rules being fair:

It's fair when the teacher yells at a student. Students feel that this is fair because then it makes that person not do it again.

It's fair when he uses the response chart. He can talk to just one person who did something wrong instead of all of us 'cause he was the only one doing it.

It's fair when our teacher gets angry when people are wrestling and then takes them to the peace corner and tells them that they get a pink slip and then he kind of yells at them. It makes them not do it again.

Overall, the students thought the rules in this classroom were fair. However, one

individual noticed that they were not consistent throughout the school: “I think the rules are fair. But when we go to other classrooms, the rules are different. Sometimes it feels unfair when the rules are different than other classrooms. But they’re working well so far.”

(a) When are the rules sometimes not fair?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Many of the students in the groups mentioned that the way the checkbox was used in the classroom was not fair. They said,

The checkbox because everyone has to stay in for recess if only one or two people are talking loud. It isn’t a good idea ‘cause then you would miss your fun time and that’s the only time where you can run up to the teacher and have fun. Or if it’s recess time, we have to run laps. It’s not fair when everyone has to run laps at recess if only a few people were not paying attention. We don’t like using our energy unless we get to play so we don’t like running laps.

The students were probed to say more about a time they mentioned when they were studying at their desk and two other people were talking, but the students studying also got a check. They were asked, “How did you feel if you were being good and the teacher did a check against the class and you lost your recess?” Students explained,

It kind of feels like, ah man, why do we have to get a check?

Sad because they were quiet and the others were not being quiet. It makes me feel like I’ve got a headache and I want to cry.

It makes me feel kind of angry at the people that got us the noise box. Mad because I wasn’t the one talking and they made the people that weren’t doing nothing lose recess.

I’m mad at the students. I feel like I shouldn’t get into trouble. It makes me PO’ed. I want to beat the living daylights out of them. But I’m not mad at the teacher.

If the whole class has to stay in for recess, students react differently. Students said:

The people who were being quiet will look at the people who were being loud.

I just deal with it. I just go on with the day and when I go out to recess and we lose five minutes, it doesn't seem like five minutes.

Sometimes we look at the person talking and look at them mad or say "sshh." We could just write their name on the board who done it instead of making the whole class get in trouble.

The Constructivist focus groups. During the classroom observation the teacher reminded the students that they needed to play with someone different instead of the partner they had the day before, and said, "Okay, skedaddle!" The students went to their favorite games. Two of the students were upset because two other students were playing the same game they had the day before and the two others wanted a chance to play it. The four of them talked about it not being fair, but the two who had the game did not give in. The other two students decided it wasn't worth fighting about and went to find another game. During the interviews, students used this type of situation as an example of a time when rules are not fair. One student said, "When we're playing games during choice time, and someone else wants to play again but the others keep playing. It's unfair cause they keep on playing and we only get 15 minutes of choice." This example related more to other students' behaviors, not the teacher's setting or enforcement of rules, which may suggest the students' ability to assess behavior, right or wrong, independent of the teacher.

As students described the rules they view as fair in the Assertive Discipline classroom (see Table 5), they are non-negotiable and sometimes applied arbitrarily. For example, different consequences and rewards are used depending on the classroom situation.

Table 5

Students' Examples of Fair and Unfair Treatment in the Classroom

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|--|---|
| <i>(a) What is an example of your teacher behaving fairly?</i> | | |
| The card system | The teacher helps someone who has lost something | Responses to whole-class Behavior Non-negotiable outcome |
| The Noise Box | The Decision Game | |
| The Cotton Ball Jar | The Response Chart The Peace Corner When the teacher yells | |
| <i>(b) When are the rules sometimes not fair</i> | | |
| The checkbox | When someone doesn't let others play a game | |
| Running laps outside for recess | When other classrooms have different rules | |

The card system is used in the Assertive Discipline classroom when one student is not following classroom rules, and the noise box is used for inappropriate behaviors displayed by the whole class. The cotton ball jar is used as a reward system when the whole class is behaving appropriately. There is some limited negotiation in that the teacher and students decide what the reward will be when the jar is full.

Students used the words *noise box* and *checkbox* interchangeably in referring to the same examples. Even though students describe these techniques as fair, they do believe that when the whole class is punished for something one or two other students are doing, the consequences are not fair. In this way, the students' answers reflected a theme similar to one expressed by the constructivist students: that consequences should apply only when deserved. Running laps is one of the consequences used in the Assertive

Discipline class when someone gets three checks in the box; three checks requires all the students to run laps during their recess time. However, students also commented running laps isn't really a punishment because it doesn't help them follow the rules. In spite of students' views of situations like these, students stated that overall it is fair for the teacher to take these actions because they help to control noise and other inappropriate behaviors.

Based on the students' responses, when they felt that punishment was unfair, it led to negative feelings toward their peers and about themselves. However, when asked, they could not suggest any punishments other than what the teacher implemented for inappropriate student behavior. This is a significant finding in that students viewed certain rules to be unfair and were able to articulate and provide examples of both positive and negative behaviors they exhibit as a result. If students work in an environment in which they feel controlled by rules that are unfair, at what point do they begin to rebel and to what degree does this limit their ability to self-regulate beyond the classroom? They have not been given opportunities to develop a sense of personal conviction for what is right and wrong or to resolve a problem on their own, independent of the teacher's enforcement of the rules.

In the constructivist classroom, several strategies are used as a response to the whole class's behavior (reward or problem resolution); however, the whole class does not receive a consequence for the inappropriate behaviors of other students. When there is a problem among students or between the teacher and a student, the Peace Chair is used to

provide them a place where they can work out problems and decide together the right thing to do.

It is clear that the rules students identified as fair in the constructivist classroom support the constructivist view of how a cooperative relationship between student and teacher can be accomplished. For example, when a student loses something, the students described the teacher's response as fair because the teacher said that it wasn't the person's fault. The Decision Game and the response chart are more arbitrary in the sense that the outcome is not negotiable. However, the Decision Game allows students to have input into what types of decisions are made (not how the decision is made). This is similar to how the Assertive Discipline teacher uses the cotton ball jar as she allows students to have input into what type of party they will have once the jar is full.

The issue of hand-raising was not mentioned as an example of either fair or unfair behavior in either classroom. However, both teachers see the issue as relating to fairness. The Assertive Discipline teacher requires students to raise their hands to participate in the classroom so that no one interrupts anyone else's turn to speak, whereas the constructivist teacher believes the fair way to provide all students the opportunity to participate is to use a response chart and require students to *not* raise their hands.

5. How would you like the rules in the classroom to be different?

(a) If you could change the rules, what rules would you change and what would you change them to?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Students were unanimous in their opinion that they should be allowed to do some things on their own without permission. One

student offered this example: “We should know how to get a tissue because we’ve been in school for four years. We shouldn’t have to raise our hands.” One of the students explored in detail some circumstances where it would be unnecessary or necessary to get permission to leave her seat. She said,

I wish we could get out of our seats to get a tissue, go to the bathroom, or sharpen our pencil. Then you could get up and sharpen your pencil when it’s really dull without having to raise your hand. We sharpen our pencils after lunch. But I wouldn’t change it if I were the teacher because I wouldn’t want ‘em to be up in the middle of the assignment. But if they raise their hand and ask if they could go sharpen their pencil, I’d check it. But if it was good enough to where they could still write, I wouldn’t let ‘em sharpen it. But if it was like really, really dull to where you could barely write, if it was like sharpened on one side, but not the other I’d let ‘em go sharpen it.

During the classroom observation, no students got out of their seats unless they had permission from the teacher. One student working at her desk started to get up without raising her hand. She had wanted to sharpen her pencil. However, she quickly sat down as soon as she saw the teacher. She raised her hand and said, “Oops!” She was never called on after waiting several minutes. She then tried to peel back the wood around the pencil so that she could continue to write.

Students offered other suggestions for general changes in rules or the enforcement of rules. Reinforcing an earlier theme, one student offered, “I wouldn’t punish the whole class when one person was talking,” and another said, “I wouldn’t make the whole class miss your fun time because that’s important to us.” Other students suggested the following:

Let the kids have some activities. Play games and have fun activities like connect the dots and word finding and make puppet things.

Around holidays she lets us have word finding.

Maybe the teacher should put glue on the bottom of our chair so that it would be easier to stay in our seats.

The Constructivist focus groups. Students mentioned only one rule in answer to question 5. They said, “I have one rule I’d change. Paying to go to the bathroom. We have fake money and we have to pay it at the end of the day if we went to the bathroom.” The teacher uses this rule as one way to teach students about money.

Table 6

Students’ Examples of Rules They Would Like to Change

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Not allowed to get out of their seats without permission Must raise hands to ask something Whole class punished for someone else’s inappropriate behavior Limited classroom activities | Paying to go to the bathroom | Some restrictions on movement |

Table 6 summarizes rules students would like to change. Rules in the Assertive Discipline classroom that seem restricting to students, rules that prevent them from getting their needs met are viewed by the students as “not right.” They stated that these rules help the teacher manage the classroom more smoothly, but they feel limited when their basic needs such as “asking a question” or “sharpening their pencil” have to be put on hold until the teacher recognizes them. Even then, the teacher may not give them permission. Students in the constructivist classroom view the procedure for going to the

bathroom as restricting for two reasons. The first is that they don't want to spend their money to leave the classroom because they want to save it for Store Day and two, they have to calculate math, adding and subtracting dollar and cent amounts, if they do leave the room.

These findings make it clear that when restrictions or limitations are put on students, the students seem to view their ability to perform or the amount of freedom they have in the classroom as negative. However, there is a big difference between how students in these classrooms are restricted. In the Assertive Discipline classroom, some restrictions prevent students' needs from being met immediately. The Canters (1976, 2001) would not be opposed to this. They repeatedly say that the teacher's needs are to be met in the classroom and the teacher is boss. This is desirable as long as the teacher is in charge and the manner in which the teacher sets up the structure and rules of the classroom is perceived as best for the students.

Based on the findings, it can be assumed that restriction in the constructivist classroom is defined as part of the learning process itself. There is an academic lesson to learn when students follow the bathroom rule. However, it is their choice to follow it or not, and there is no consequence for deciding to wait and not pay the money to leave the classroom, unless they wait too long.

Students' Perceptions of Classroom Consequences

The responses to Interview questions 6 and 7 are directly related to the Assertive Discipline classroom instrument regarding implementation of corrective actions. In

keeping with the constructivist classroom instrument, the responses to these questions relate to encouraging and supporting children's autonomy and interaction with others.

6. What does your teacher do when someone breaks a rule?

(a) Tell me what your teacher does when students are fighting or having an argument.

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. The Canters (1976, 2001) stated that students must experience non-negotiable negative consequences or corrective actions when they behave inappropriately. They should not be humiliated, criticized, or caused any physical pain. Each time a rule is broken or a direction is not followed, the student should receive a corrective action.

During the classroom observation in the Assertive Discipline classroom, students did experience immediate consequences for rule breaking. Names went on the board without explanation, students stayed in for recess with their heads down, and the teacher used non-verbal behaviors such as proximity and stern looks to redirect behavior. Question 6 and follow-ups were asked in order to encourage students to both describe and react to their teacher's response to rule-breaking behavior.

The students in the Assertive Discipline focus groups became passionate when answering this question. Their voices and bodies became animated as they offered their responses. The students offered some very specific descriptions of their teacher's verbal and nonverbal behavior, revealing a general sensitivity to both that will be explored in later sections:

Some kids don't listen that good and then she just has to get really, really mad and just shouts. She gives you a really big lecture on not to do that cause you might get into more trouble so don't do that again.

She gets really, really angry. She gets loud and if we're like loud and if you make her angry the same day, each time that you make her angrier in one day, she gets louder and louder and louder and she starts pointing her finger. That's not a good sign! She'll point it to everyone in the class.

When she gets mad, that makes me feel scared sometimes 'cause she's really loud and when she gets up close to you and you think you're in trouble, and then she points it at someone else and it makes your heart race sometimes, to me, anyway. Scared, scared. It makes me want to be quiet. I would think all the other third-grade classes could hear her, she gets so loud. She gets very, very loud.

The cards referred to in the final student's comment are located on the bulletin board by the door with everyone's names on one envelope box that is stapled to the board. The students described these boxes as their "heart boxes." Color-coded cards are placed in each box, and each card represents a different level of consequence. White indicates that a student hasn't disobeyed a rule. Next is the yellow card, which means a student has to miss one recess. The third card is green. If that one is showing, the student misses two recesses. The fourth card is blue and signals that students are to leave the room and go out into the hallway or to another classroom. The fifth card is pink-orange. When this card is showing, the student is sent to the principal's office and the student's parents are called.

Students described the card system, levels of consequence, the noise box, and the cotton jar in detail.

The cards are where if you get in trouble, if you get your name written up on the board it's a warning. The teacher writes the student's name on the board. If she's up there and you're talking, she yells at you and puts your name on the board. If you're in the front row and she's in the back or if she's behind the class at her desk, then she'll just call the person's name and tell them to put their name up on the board. If you get your name on the board, you should know that you should have not done that because you should know better. So you deserved getting your name on the board. Then if you still don't listen, then the teacher pulls a card.

There's five colors in each, in everybody's heart boxes. Everyone starts out with a white card and the white card that's showing means you haven't done nothing. You haven't pulled a card yet. When students do not follow a rule, the white card is placed behind the other cards and there's a yellow card showing which means you miss one recess. You miss your fun time and that's the only time where you can run up to the teacher and have fun.

The third card is green and when that's pulled, you miss two recesses. The fourth card is blue green and you have to leave the room. If students keep forgetting to raise their hands, the teacher would send them out of the room in the hall or in another room. If someone yells or talks while the teacher is talking, not doing their work, their blue card is pulled and they leave the room.

And the fifth card is pinkish orange and you just go to the principal's office and you'll probably get suspended, or maybe get detention. Students do homework in detention. You get sent to the principal for fighting, talking back to the teacher, cussing the teacher, or sassing the teacher. The principal would call our mom. I will sit in my chair for the rest of my life.

One student was very adamant in expressing his feelings about a particular punishment, the students who bring about the consequences, and the effectiveness of the teacher's strategy:

When the whole class goes into the hallway for a punishment, I'm embarrassed. I'd like to beat the living daylights out of 'em. If it is recess time and the whole class is punished, we have to run laps. At recess, you have to walk to the playground. There's a playground up there and you have to run down the hill, go that way, and then another way until you get to the monkey bars. Then you go straight up that hill and then back around again. But running laps is not really a consequence. It doesn't work. It doesn't help us follow the rules 'cause it seems like you're still playing. You're just doing the same thing and I like running laps. You might see some of your friends and you might start walking with them and start talking with them. So that's not really a punishment. But it will make you follow directions.

In the classroom, the teacher also has a noise box. She will draw a box on the board and if the students are too loud, she'll put a checkmark in the noise box. When the box has 3 checkmarks in it, the whole class loses one recess. If they receive more than three checkmarks, they have to lose a recess the following day.

One student explained,

We usually get a noise box on Fridays cause we're excited and it's really close to go home. If we get three checks and we're still loud, we have to put our heads down. That helps some people but not everyone.

Another student described the relationship between the noise box and the cotton jar:

The teacher uses a cotton ball jar for reinforcement of good behavior such as being quiet in the hallway, lining up quietly and quickly, being good throughout the day, bringing their homework back, or getting their work completed right the first time. The teacher gives us one or two cotton balls if we do things right. When the cotton jar is full, we get a party. But if one person is bad, we don't get a cotton ball.

During the classroom observation, the teacher rewarded the students with one cotton ball for lining up appropriately and then again for being quiet in the hallway. She told them that if they all got the math done right the first time and before recess, they would get two cotton balls.

When asked how they felt about one person preventing them from getting a cotton ball, one student said, "If everyone has their assignment done except one person, well, you don't yell at them. You just tell them next time to kind of prepare."

The Constructivist focus groups. Constructivist educators argue that when students break a rule, punitive forms of punishment should not be used. Instead, acts of reciprocity should be used to guide the child toward making better decisions (DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Waldron & Applegate, 1998). Nothing in the students' responses indicated that they perceive any of the rules in their classroom as punitive. Rather, they see rules as helping them to learn how to fix problems in different ways.

Students in the constructivist focus groups mentioned the classroom agreements, pink and yellow slips, and I-messages. They were able to provide some details to

illustrate how each of these techniques is employed by the teacher. Regarding classroom agreements, students said,

Sometimes the teacher asks a student to read the agreements and look what you're doing wrong. Then he asks if we can fix the problem. If not, he'll help us.

When probed to explain more specifically how they use the agreements to help them fix a problem, they said,

We look to see if we are doing something we didn't agree to and if we are then we try to fix it and do something different. Sometimes if someone can't control their behavior, we all talk about it and try to see how we can help them.

Students explained how the pink and yellow slips were used and how they react to receiving each kind. They said,

The teacher uses pink slips. You get a pink slip if you annoy somebody, run in the classroom, be mean, or something. Sometimes you get a reminder and sometimes you don't. The pink slips won't stop you from being really bad, like not listening. I got tons of pink ones, but I usually can fix my problem. The yellow slips are ones where you have to go to the middle school gym and you have to do your work there.

You don't keep the pink slips. When the teacher gives you one, we go to the Peace Chair and he says, "I gave this to you just because I don't like it when you ____." And then we talk about the problem and he asks if we can fix the problem or do we need help. After we talk about it, we throw the slip in the trash. It makes you feel a lot better after you've seen why you got it. 'Cause you know your parents aren't really going to see it.

One student reported being very conscientious when he receives a slip. He said,

"Sometimes I feel a little uncomfortable so I tell my parents that I got a pink slip that day." Another student went on to describe the slip that is most dreaded by the students:

The teacher uses yellow slips. Those are worse cause you don't rip them up. The teacher has a folder that has your name on it and you have to keep them. This slip is for you, the teacher, and your parents. When you get another slip, it is for the parents, teacher, and the principal. The next one is you're out of the classroom. If you ignore the teacher, then he'll scold you and he might just get really mad at you. He'll say don't ever ignore me or you'll get a yellow slip.

The I-message was used to let students know how their behavior affects others. Students reported that “the teacher wants us to use I messages if we break a rule.” The students also offered an example of how they would use the I-message. They said that when someone is bothering them, they would say, “Like, I feel mad when you do this. Will you please stop? Most of the time that works.” As the discussion continued, the I-message approach became more clear.

Table 7

Teachers' Reactions to Student Rule-Breaking

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Shouts, gives a lecture | Scolding or getting mad | Teacher gets angry |
| Doesn't use the cotton jar | “We all talk about it” | |
| Points a finger | Uses the Classroom | |
| Pulls a card | Agreements | |
| Puts names on the board | Uses I-Message | Use of a card or slip to note names/incidents |
| Puts a check in the noise box | Calls a Classroom Meeting | |
| | Uses pink and yellow slip | |

When someone breaks a rule in the Assertive Discipline classroom, the Canthers (1976, 2001) stated that the consequences are to be rigid and allow for no exceptions. After the rules have been explained to students, anyone who does not comply will experience a corrective action. However, the Canthers do not suggest anywhere in their literature that the teacher should raise his or her voice—just the opposite. The teacher is to remain calm (Canter, 2001). The Canthers' would not support the yelling behavior from this teacher nor should one assume that all Assertive Discipline teachers resort to yelling.

Students in the constructivist classroom mentioned that the teacher gets mad when someone ignores him, but they did not mention that he shouts when someone has broken

a rule (Table 7). Students from both classrooms stated that their teachers talk to individuals privately; however, based on the students' responses, the Assertive Discipline teacher sometimes scares the group when she is loud and angry with an individual or in individuals who have broken the rules. In contrast, the constructivist teacher takes a student who has behaved inappropriately back to the peace chair or talks to the individual back at their desk. These descriptions suggest that punishment is more likely in one classroom, whereas finding a solution to problems and protecting individual dignity is a greater emphasis in the other.

7. Tell me what the best thing is to do when someone breaks a rule.

(a) Why is this the best thing to do?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Question 7 invited students to use their experience to evaluate the effectiveness of various consequences. In the Assertive Discipline focus groups, one student took the opportunity to express her views about one student telling the teacher about another student's misbehavior. She said, "I wouldn't tell because you would just be a tattletale." Students decided that the best things to do are putting a student's name on the board, giving students checkmarks after their names, using the noise box, and reminding them of the rule. Students' responses relating to each procedure are offered to illustrate the students' reasoning.

One boy always got his name on the board and he didn't have any friends. Then he started to play football and then he started to have some friends. The teacher didn't put his name on the board very much after that.

Giving students three checkmarks because I would not like the people talking out loud when I'm talking. Take away free time when we get too loud and when we get three checks. Then if that doesn't work, pull their card because they've broken a rule. And even if it was my best friend, I would because I knew that they had.

Putting your name on the board and getting checkmarks seems to be a way that we deal with a lot of rules in the class.

Use the noise box, because it may teach the people that were talking to be quiet because when you have two checks that might give a sign that you really need to be quiet. But it doesn't work all the time. The teacher could either give another warning or put another checkbox on the board. We quit for a while but then we're loud one more time and then we quit again for a while.

Remind students to raise their hands. Tell them to remember to raise their hands. Remind them to do what they're supposed to do. I would hold up my hands so they would remember. The teacher sends them out of the room. You could tell the teacher. Because I know they've broken a rule and it wouldn't be right to let 'em go because they might do it again and they'd think they'd be getting away with it.

The Constructivist focus groups. When answering Question 7, the students in the constructivist focus groups seemed very conscious of other students' feelings even when they assumed they were talking about someone in trouble a lot. Their answers emphasized wanting to help the person who breaks the rules. Here are two examples:

Don't laugh at them. Like when someone gets in trouble, don't think they're dumb or something 'cause they just got in trouble.

Don't look at 'em like you're staring at 'em and then they think that you're laughing at them cause then it makes them feel bad because they're already in trouble.

The students in the Assertive Discipline classroom view the responses listed in Table 8 as the best ones; their choices reflect their wish to avoid being punished. It is clear that the means the students would use to control behavior are the ones most frequently modeled by the teacher. Students believe the techniques are the best because they help the students follow the rules, "sometimes."

Table 8

Students' Ideas about the Best Response to Rule-Breaking

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|--|--------------|
| Put student's name on the board | Don't laugh at them | |
| Give students checkmarks | Don't think they are dumb | |
| Use the Noise Box | Don't stare at them | |
| Remind them of the rule | | |
| (a) <i>Why is this the best thing to do?</i> | | |
| To prevent students from talking out loud when someone else is talking | They may think you're laughing at them | |
| You pull a card because they broke a rule | Laughing at them will make them feel bad because they are already in trouble | |
| If they break a rule, it wouldn't be right to let them get by with it | | |

In contrast, in Table 8, the students in the constructivist classroom mention mostly things they can do to understand the perspective of others and to protect the dignity of the student. This too demonstrates the influence of the teacher as role model. These two comparisons take into account that both the teacher's verbal and nonverbal behaviors will significantly affect their students' behavior to the point that they will pattern their behaviors on what their teacher says and does.

Students' Understanding of Self-Control

Interview questions 8 through 11 are directly related to the Assertive Discipline classroom instrument and what it indicates about teaching responsible behavior. For the constructivist classroom, the interview responses correspond to constructivist beliefs

about exploration and participation, encouraging and supporting autonomy in children, and children's interaction with others.

8. What are examples of appropriate behaviors for students in the classroom?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. In answering this question, students listed the same behaviors they listed in question 1 of the interview.

The Constructivist focus groups. In the constructivist classroom, several times throughout the classroom observation a student who had a problem with another student took that person to the Peace Chair. The chair was located in the back of the room. The purpose of the Peace Chair was to give the students the opportunity to talk about problems they had with each other, and they were given five minutes to come up with a solution. If after that time a solution could not be reached, the teacher would help them brainstorm possible solutions. When I asked why they used the Peace Chair, a student replied,

“So we learn how to control our behavior better and we can get along.” The students gave several examples. Similar to the students in the Assertive Discipline classroom, many of their examples of appropriate behaviors were inappropriate behaviors to avoid, for example, “Don’t talk when the teacher is talking.” During the classroom observation, there were opportunities to observe this behavior and other students’ reactions to it. On several occasions a student would walk up to the teacher while he was talking to someone else. In all these situations, the students did not interrupt the teacher. They waited until he looked at them and acknowledged them. Other examples of appropriate behaviors were provided by the students as follows:

Not running around in the classroom or like wrestling.

No screaming. Don't talk when other people are talking.

When someone is really bothering you, you don't tell them to stop or boss them around. You ask them to stop.

When we follow the teacher's directions we're safe in the classroom. When there's not a teacher in the classroom or if there is a teacher in the classroom we still follow the teacher's directions.

Using the I-messages and using manners like saying please and whenever we have a problem, we have to fix it by ourselves.

Table 9

Students' Examples of Appropriate Classroom Behavior

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|--|--|
| Always raise hands to ask a question or give an answer | Follow directions all the time | Follow directions and listen when someone is talking |
| Do the Give Me Five Rules | Use I-Messages | |
| Doing all assignments | Fix your problems | |
| No pinching, cussing, teasing, fighting, kicking, or standing around | No running around, wrestling, screaming, or interrupting | Lists of "do's and don'ts" |
| 1. Keep hands and feet to yourself | Don't boss people to stop doing what they're doing, ask them to stop | |
| 2. Keep eyes on speaker | | |
| 3. Use appropriate language | | |
| 4. Follow directions | Use manners, like saying "please" | |
| 5. Be nice | | Being polite |

It is interesting to note that the students in the Assertive Discipline classroom defined appropriate behaviors the same as they defined the rules of their classroom—things you

should or should not do (Table 9). Students in the constructivist classroom also offered a list of “givens” they should and shouldn’t do to avoid behaving inappropriately.

However, their responses suggested larger principles of behavior they believed they should apply independent of the rule lists and the presence of the teacher. Table 11 shows that the same idea was eventually mentioned by the Assertive Discipline students (that rules should be followed when the teacher isn’t present).

One question that arises is, is a student who does not always follow the rules necessarily out-of-control? Students in both classrooms stated that they are in control if they follow the rules, but there are somewhat different rules for both classrooms. It would be interesting to compare answers to this question if the teachers switched places and the students continued to follow their own classroom rules. Then how would the students and the teacher define self-control? As the students’ answers suggest, being in control does not necessarily mean that they understand what impact their behavior has on themselves or others. Self-control is largely defined by the teacher.

9. What are examples of inappropriate behaviors for students in the classroom?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. In answering Question 9, students mentioned many of the same things they said in question 1; however, they added additional behaviors. They included,

Yelling in the bathrooms, blurting out in the class or just like standing up and trying to just walk around the room without permission, climbing on the walls in the bathroom or on the stalls or something like that, talking when the teacher is talking and sometimes not listening and visiting with friends and stuff. It’s hard for me not to talk. I usually talk a lot to my friend. I sit by her.

Fighting, cussing [one student didn’t consider this a good example because his dad cusses all the time], talking back to the teacher, sassing the teacher, talking to

another student when they are suppose to be working, throwing chairs at each other, then the teacher would have to retire. She'll probably retire with all that fighting.

Not paying attention. But that's hard when we're reading and she tells us to stop and do something else and it's hard to pay attention right after recess. Also, when people get up and go to the teacher's desk and they tell the teacher something but the teacher ignores them and the student follows the teacher around the room trying to get their attention instead of holding up their hand and being patient and waiting. We think, sit down. You know we're going to get in trouble.

The Constructivist focus groups. Constructivist students listed inappropriate

behaviors that included the following:

When we're saying remember our chart and someone is yelling but they say "Whatever." It really annoys us sometimes.

That you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing. You're bossing everybody around and bothering them.

If the whole class is being anarchy, then it looks like we're being a horrible class. We do not want to be a horrible class.

When someone isn't using their I-messages. Because that is telling us what is bothering someone else.

Fighting in the classroom, wrestling, shouting at the top of your voice. Not listening because then you can't hear what the teacher or someone else is saying.

Two students mentioned calling names: "Someone is mean, maybe hitting. Sometimes it's kind of mean and sometimes it's kind of nice because sometimes someone just wants to hit someone. But you tell them no."

Students from both classrooms view inappropriate behaviors as any behavior that breaks the rules of the classroom (Table 10). The students use the rules as their guide to define appropriate performance and behavior. It can be concluded from these responses that when students understand what the rules are, they know what behaviors are expected from them and also know that inappropriate behaviors will be dealt with.

Table 10

Students' Examples of Inappropriate Classroom Behaviors

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|
| Yelling in the bathrooms | Anarchy | Shouting |
| Blurting out in class | Bossing | |
| Walking around without Permission | Running around | |
| Not paying attention | Someone not using I-Messages | Not listening |
| Fighting, cussing, talking back to the teacher | Wrestling, hitting | Physical contact |
| Visiting with friends | Calling names | |
| Throwing chairs | | |
| Following the teacher around the room | | |

10. What does it mean when someone controls his or her behavior?

(a) How do you learn to control your behavior?

Although Question 10 is somewhat more open-ended than many of the others, students had no trouble coming up with a mix of general responses and concrete examples.

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Several students concurred that a good general definition of controlling behavior is using appropriate language and behavior, listening, paying attention, and doing “what you’re supposed to be doing;” “to sit quietly when you don’t have anything to do.” One student offered a concrete sign of controlled behavior: “Never get my card pulled because you don’t want to miss recess.” Going on to describe the outcome of failing to keep control, the student explained, “The person that lost their recess, well, they’d probably be PO’ed. But they should try to listen up

whenever they get that card pulled.” Most students, however, answered this question by listing many inappropriate behaviors that they would get in trouble for in the classroom—in other words, explaining controlled behavior with examples of its opposite or behaviors to avoid. Students said,

It means you don’t fight and yell.

You don’t get mad very often. You don’t lose your temper and try to make your face turn red and look mad.

If the teacher was gone and I needed to sharpen your pencil, I would stay in my seat until she gets back so you wouldn’t get in trouble ‘cause one of your classmates might tell.

Students’ answers also offered some insights into the situations that challenge their self-control the most:

Sometimes it’s hard for someone to control their behavior because of their hyperness.

Like if people are calling them names, don’t go over to them and start beating them up.

It’s like somebody said something mean to you and you try to control your behavior and don’t get mad very often.

You wouldn’t tell the teacher if someone called you a name.

When someone else is really loud and you’re just sitting there paying attention to the teacher.

Students’ responses to this prompt included some general principles, such as “The Give Me Five rules help me control my behavior. I just try to work things out.” More frequently, students mentioned concrete situations in which they believed self-control was learned, such as “by learning the rules,” “by staying in for recess,” and “standing out

for recess like for 30 minutes.” Some students reported learning the rules by encouraging others to obey the rules.

Tell the people who are doing it to like be quiet please and don’t fight. But most of the time it doesn’t really work. We tell them so that we wouldn’t have to stay after so we won’t have to miss our recess.

Tell the teacher who is not controlling their behavior so the whole class is not punished.

And finally, some students credited people and events *outside* the classroom for helping to teach them self-control.

I didn’t learn from the classroom. I learned it from my mom and dad. They told me not to get mad and I learned my lesson from getting set in the corner and spankings. Mostly because I don’t want my butt spanked from my dad.

I learned it from my brother who is bipolar and ADHD. I know how he acts when he is really, really hyper so I know not to be like him.

I learned it in daycare when my friend wasn’t behaving and they made him sit down. I didn’t want to get into trouble like my friend did. He didn’t get to play with the rest of us and missed some fun things to do during free-time.

The Constructivist focus groups. In comparison, students in the constructivist focus groups concentrated more on the process of learning self-control:

We learn to control our behavior by lots of practice. Just the way the teacher teaches it works really well. Like when we do the levels of cooperation. We go up to the chart and read the list and see what we’re doing wrong. And we can understand it easy. We know exactly what to do and what happens when rules are broken, most of the time. His rules are very, very clear.

If the teacher wasn’t in the room, the students would probably pull one of the choice things out and start playing until the teacher came back.

Use the I-message and using the peace corner. You learn to try to fix your problems. We have a name-tag on our desk with the I-message on it.

When someone comes over and taps me on the shoulder or something and they tell me what I’m doing wrong. And that reminds me what I’m supposed to be doing.

We ask other people. We watch other kids and make new friends and then they'll tell you.

Students also mentioned ways they try to control their behavior when they are at home, one student volunteering that "When I'm not in the classroom, I control my behavior by screaming into my pillow at home." Some students reported trying to use at home what they've learned about self-control at school: "It's harder to control your behavior with your brother because you always get in fights. But what our teacher has taught us has helped us a lot." And finally, one student made a comparison between controlling himself at home and at school: "It's harder to control your behavior at home because you don't have the same rules."

As Table 11 shows, students in the Assertive Discipline classroom described what some one looks like or does when they control their behavior, but they were not able to specify how these skills are developed or the reasons behind them. They described what it means to control their behavior according to the rules of their classroom. In other words, a person who controls their behavior follows the rules made by the teacher. According to the classroom observations and interviews, it can be concluded that these students are not given the opportunity to question or examine what these behaviors mean in terms of self-control.

In comparison, the students' responses in the constructivist classroom identified some specific strategies they used to develop self-control.

Table 11

Students' Examples of Controlling Their Own Behavior

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|---|---|--------------|
| Sitting Quietly | Using I-messages | |
| Never getting a card pulled | Screaming into a pillow when mad | |
| Not fighting | Using the agreement chart | |
| Paying attention, and don't get into trouble | Using the agreement chart | |
| | Using the Peace Corner | |
| Following the rules when the teacher isn't around | | |
| Not getting mad often | | |
| Don't tell if someone doesn't follow the rules | | |
| Use appropriate language | | |
| Listening | | |
| <i>(a) How do you learn to control your behavior?</i> | | |
| Ask the teacher for help | Lots of practice | |
| | Someone reminds me | |
| | Name tag on desk to remind students of the I-messages | |
| | Ask other people | |
| | Try to fix your problem | |

There is substantial evidence that these students are given the opportunities to question and examine what behaviors mean in terms of self-control. For instance, they offered examples such as "When I get mad at my brother, I don't want to fight so I scream into my pillow;" "I feel bad when I do something wrong so I tell my mom and dad;" and "Talking about the problem is better than fighting." Based on the findings, these students have discovered that if they do something wrong, they "have a way to not do that

anymore.” They are encouraged to try to fix the problem in a constructive way using one of these methods.

11. What is the best thing for the teacher to do to help students control their behavior?

(a) Why is this the best thing to do?

(b) How do you handle problems when the teacher is not able to help you?

(c) Is this the best way to handle problems?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Students discussed methods such as the teacher giving them prizes, using the noise box, putting names on the board, yelling at the students, and using the cotton jar, and students playing a part in classroom control by ignoring rule-breakers and raising hands.

Give us prizes: if we're doing our math, we get our name in a jar if we are getting the answers right. Then she'll draw the names out and if your name is drawn, you get a prize like a pencil, or a bookmark.

If she helps us find out the answer she still won't put our name in the jar because you need to have the right answer the first time. We don't get a second chance. The noise box system, cause it makes you work. Even though it's not fair to everybody in the class, it is a good idea because it helps the class be quiet and so they'll learn not to do it anymore.

Have students raise their hand when they need a tissue, to get a drink, ask for help because the teacher doesn't want you to miss out on working on a paper or if she is giving directions.

Either put a name on the board or the card pulled so they'll learn not to do it anymore. But leave the name on the board all day because it may teach the person that we're trying to be quiet and when you have two checks after your name that might give a sign that you really need to be quiet. But it doesn't work all the time. Some people just don't care and they keep going on talking.

Teachers have to yell. They got to be that way so the students learn and behave. But you don't necessarily have to be mean. But you have to get angry a lot because if you don't, then people will keep getting worse and worse every single day. So you have to have a lot of rules so you learn to work better and pay attention.

You can just ignore people who don't control their behavior and pretend they're not there or something like that so you can get your work done and won't have to struggle and miss recess. If you have three late assignments, then it goes on the grade book as a zero even if they come in late. That helps us get our work done on time.

Tell the people who are like yelling at the teacher and stuff to stop. And when she's talking to another person, they'll start uh talking out loud. And when we switch to another subject, they start talking again.

Have people raise their hands before they talk or get out of their seats. I think it would be pretty loud and the teacher wouldn't be able to understand. That's a good rule because then everyone would just be jumping around the classroom.

Use the cotton ball jar and have the teacher decide on what kind of party we have but give us a choice between watching a movie or something else.

The Constructivist focus groups. These students combined their answers to answer all three questions together. They mentioned using the I-message, peace conference, Hutton money, the Decision game, levels of cooperation, and group meetings. Individual responses are categorized according to which of these activities they mentioned.

The I-message: He teaches us the I-message. He first started talking about it at the beginning of the school year. We have cards on our desk with that stuff so we know what to do. And he showed us them. And whenever we had a conflict, we'd go to the closest desk and use 'em. It's like when someone gets in a conflict, you have to do an I-message or a simple request. We practiced the I-messages at the beginning of the year and we have a learning buddy to practice with. When someone bosses, I would tell him just not to boss and use a low tone of voice so it doesn't seem like I'm yelling. I ask them to be quiet. You can use it for a request too. A request is a little bit shorter because it says will you please stop doing that? Just make a simple request.

I use it like when somebody bothered me. Like if they are bossing people around. Like, I feel bad when you do this because it hurts my feelings or it hurts my body. And then you say will you please stop or will you please help me get back up or will you please get the nurse or something. It usually ends the problem.

Peace conference: A conference is when you take somebody who's annoying you back to the peace chair for five minutes to settle your problem. And you have five

minutes to solve their problem. Like have a way to not do that anymore. If you don't figure it out, you have to do it again at another time of the day.

Hutton money: The Hutton money is play money. The students receive \$40 at the beginning of the month to spend on certain things. On the bulletin board, by the attendance chart, the teacher puts a dollar amount for the day. If students have to leave the room, it costs them that amount, which they subtract from their \$40.

Students gave additional examples of how the Hutton money can be used. One student said,

If you don't leave the room or don't go to the bathroom, you get to keep your money. If your desk is messy at the end of the day, you owe a fine of \$5. You have to clean your desk and have the desk inspectors come back and check it again and if they say it's fine, they give you a go card and you can leave and you don't owe anything and you can go get ready to go home. Then at the end of the month, we have store day.

Students felt that Mr. Hutton money helped them to monitor their bathroom breaks.

Students also expressed the belief that the money does keep them from going to the bathroom and interrupting school. Many of them agreed with this student's opinion:

I wouldn't go to the bathroom unless I really had to. Sometimes it's worth doing. You know what? I think he does it to keep kids in class.

Students were asked an additional follow-up question, "What happens if you don't have that system next year? Do you think you'd be more likely to go to the bathroom to get out of class?" The students said, "Maybe, I don't know. If we have a terrible class or if it was kind of boring."

The Decision game: One student noted that using the Decision game helps with self control because "it's easier than just fighting.

The levels of cooperation: According to a student, "When the teacher reminds us to think about our level of cooperation that reminds us of what we are doing and if we need to fix something." During the classroom observation, the teacher froze and said to the

students, “For some reason some of us are not doing what we are supposed to be doing. What is our level of cooperation if we do that?” Students replied, “B” (bothering). The teacher said, “When we are at level B, that really messes up our room. In my opinion, we need to change our level of cooperation. Any questions? Let’s go back to work.” This was observed during the classroom observation and on the videotape. When students did go back to work, they seemed to be more attentive to their work.

When a student has a problem that affects the whole class, the group meeting is used. Prior to this meeting, the teacher discusses having the meeting with the student who is having a behavior problem. If the student agrees, then the problem is discussed with the whole class in a group meeting. During the meeting, the teacher and the individual student ask for classmates’ input into how they can help this individual student. Students described this process. They said,

In the meeting, we like say stuff that is bothering us that he [another student] is doing and then the teacher puts what we think on the chart. Sometimes that student doesn’t know what he’s doing to get so many I-messages. Then we think of ways we can help him do better so he doesn’t get so many I-messages.

When asked how they handled their problems when the teacher wasn’t around, students reported using the tools and strategies set up in the classroom:

If someone comes over and taps me on the shoulder tells me what I’m doing wrong, that reminds me what to do. But whenever I do something wrong I don’t mean to, I usually feel bad about myself.

I either wait until the teacher comes back into the room or I ask the person I’m having trouble with if they would go to the Peace Chair to try to fix our problem.

Sometimes I remind the person who is bothering me to please stop and use the I-message and if that doesn’t work, I try it again later on. If it still doesn’t work, then I ask Mr. Hutton for help. We go to the Peace Chair. Then that works with his help.

Table 12

Students' Opinions of the Best Methods for Teachers to Use to Help Students Control Themselves

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|--|---|--------------|
| Teacher gives prizes so work is done right | Uses I-Messages so conflicts can be handled | |
| Uses the Noise Box to keep everyone quiet | Tapes the I-Messages to desks so we know them | |
| Makes students raise hands (helps class stay quiet and hear directions) | Asks what the level of cooperation is so students can assess their own behavior | |
| Puts names on the board to teach students to be quiet | Tells students to make a request when someone is bothering them | |
| Yelling, so students learn to behave and pay attention | Holds a peace conference to solve a problem | |
| Tells us to ignore people so we can get our work done | Uses the Decision Game it's easier than fighting | |
| Tells people to stop talking | Uses Hutton Money so everyone does the activities | |
| Uses the Cotton Ball Jar so students can watch a movie or something else | Have a group meeting so students can help each other out | |
| | Someone reminds students what they're doing wrong | |

Table 12 shows students' responses when both groups were asked what they considered to be the best ways for the teacher to deal with behavior problems. There is substantial evidence that the Assertive Discipline teacher's methods are forms of external control used in order to motivate them to get their work done, help the students learn to listen to the teacher, and help them avoid unnecessary contact with their peers. The

Assertive Discipline students' descriptions of best methods fit the rules and consequences that have been implemented in the classroom.

The students' in the constructivist classroom identified some specific methods their teacher uses to help students control themselves. Similar to the responses given by the students in the Assertive Discipline focus groups, the responses given by the students in the constructivist focus groups also paralleled the rules and consequences that had already been implemented in their classroom.

Based on these findings, another important theme is evident in the students' remarks; it is that the methods students define as enabling them to control their behavior are those that have already been determined by authority figures. Even though the two teachers used different methods, the students clearly *learned* those methods. Therefore, the most important consideration for the teacher is to know whether or not their methods provide the skills students need in their everyday lives to help them control their own behavior.

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Behaviors

Responses to interview questions twelve and thirteen are directly related to the Assertive Discipline classroom instrument regarding building positive relationships. For the constructivist classroom instrument, these interview responses relate to developing autonomy through constructivist teaching practices. They also relate to developing a cooperative adult-child relationship, even more than autonomy.

12. What don't you like about your teacher? If you could change something about your teacher, what would it be?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Students' answers to this question provided a more complete picture on the theme of sensitivity to the way teachers use their voices, with many students expressing discomfort with harsh tones and yelling:

The cussing, yelling sound, and the volume of her voice. She's sort of loud sometimes. Yeah, it's really loud. I have to cover my ears. She gets on my nerves a lot. Yeah, sometimes, she gets on my nerves whenever she's yelling. That's annoying.

I kind of feel like I don't want her to be yelling 'cause I don't like it when people are yelling. It makes me feel like I want her to stop yelling.

When she, um, watches you and then she, um, yells your name and then you're like what the heck? But she yells because you were too busy playing in your desk and doing something else besides homework.

The pattern in these responses indicates that the most wished-for change in teachers is better anger management, so it makes sense that students would mention a specific symptom of anger such as raised voice. Some students mentioned anger directly:

I would change her anger and I would change her so she wouldn't get that mad when somebody doesn't listen.

When that happens I feel like I want to go home. I just wish it was summer vacation and want to get out of the classroom. I feel sad for the student. I feel kind of a little angry at the student cause they did something wrong.

Fairness was also an issue for the students. They wished for improvement both in the teacher's ability to assign blame for rule breaking and to assign consequences equally for those who didn't follow the rules:

I get mad at the teacher when she puts my name on the board but I didn't do it and somebody else did. If we're bad, she doesn't treat us all the same. I would treat everyone the same.

When I was trying to help with the overhead screen, I tried to put the screen up for the teacher but it slipped and hit the hook and broke off. The teacher got angry at me and I didn't do it on purpose.

One student suggested that more generous use of rewards would be a welcome improvement: "We would like the teacher to let us have more candy and more cotton balls when we get our assignments completed."

The Constructivist focus groups. The students in the constructivist focus groups were also asked if there was anything they would change about their teacher. Many of these students had to think for awhile. Some students expressed a view similar to this one:

No, not really. I don't think I'd change anything. But sometimes he doesn't speak so clearly. Sometimes I don't get it that well. So I ask three people before I ask him a question.

Another student said,

We have tea every Friday. But I don't like it and I usually have water or just a water and cookie. We don't have to earn it or anything. We read poems and stuff. It's our poem day. We also have book club on Friday. We can bring our own books from home to read or go to the library and check out a book to read.

This comment appeared to express a stronger opinion about tea than about the teacher himself.

Question 12 relates directly to the type of teaching style used in the classroom and the relationship that exists between student and teacher. Many students in the Assertive Discipline classroom stated that they "cover their ears," because the yelling "gets on their nerves," "it's annoying," and they "wish it was summer vacation and want to get out of the classroom" (see Table 13).

Table 13

Things Students Would Like to Change About Their Teachers

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|---|--|--------------|
| Change her cussing and yelling; the volume of her voice | Have him speak more clearly | |
| Change her anger | Change having tea on Friday to water instead | |
| Change how she gets mad when somebody doesn't listen | Nothing | |
| Stop putting names on the board | | |
| Give us more cotton balls | | |
| Treat everyone the same | | |
| Give us more cotton balls | | |
| Treat everyone the same | | |

Another student in the Assertive Discipline classroom said he doesn't "get mad at the teacher because they get their name on the board when someone else does it." Students in the constructivist classroom mentioned earlier that their teacher also yelled sometimes. However, the degree and volume does not seem to compare with what was described by the students in the Assertive Discipline classroom. The students in the constructivist classroom do not even mention the teachers' volume or yelling as something they would change about him. They stated that if he yelled at a student, they would "listen better next time." It is assumed that either these students must be accepting of his personality, or they may accept some yelling in exchange for a reciprocal relationship with the teacher.

According to the students, the Assertive Discipline teacher seems to try to control the classroom through her yelling, anger, and other management strategies. These are signs of a coercive relationship and environment. In students' terms, they do not like some of her methods of control. However, they have stated that the teacher must do this if she is going to teach or she "would have to retire." These students did not suggest any alternative behaviors; they said, "This is what teachers do." This is an example of students not thinking for themselves. The teacher does the thinking for the students.

The behaviors students said they would change about their teacher are different from the items they identified as inappropriate behaviors for themselves, with the exception of cussing. However, one question the study raises is, are teachers' inappropriate behaviors really very different from behaviors they consider inappropriate for students? According to the findings, the answer is no.

13. What do you like about your teacher?

The students in the Assertive Discipline focus groups answered Question 13 in depth. Responses from students in the constructivist focus groups are found in the section following the Assertive Discipline student's responses to question prompts (a) and (b). These prompts weren't used in the conversation with the constructivist students.

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. Instead of students mentioning personality traits or even general behaviors such as "when she is really nice," as one student mentioned, most students answered this question in terms of the teachers' use of the classroom rules. For example, students mentioned that they liked it when the teacher uses the cotton ball jar and when they get their name in the drawing. Students said,

If you fill up the cotton ball jar, um you get to have a party during class. If you're like quiet down the hall, you get like two cotton balls. If you get your assignment out, um you get like three cotton balls. If you fill the whole thing up, you get to have a party on Monday or Friday or get an extra recess. The cotton ball jar is for the whole class, so if one person doesn't get their assignment done or we are loud in class, we don't get any cotton balls.

If you don't get your name on the board for a week, she puts your name in the drawing. If you get the right answers the first time for math and reading when she is walking around, she'll put your name in the drawing. And then after a week, she'll draw the name and the student will get a pencil, bookmark, or candy.

Sometimes she can be really, really, nice. And when we had to turn our papers in for this thing, we got a piece of candy for the people that turned it in. If there was so many people that didn't turn it in, people who did turn their papers in got two pieces of candy.

For example, when the teacher was talking about you videotaping us, and if we brought the permission form back, then we got two pieces of candy. But if we didn't return it, we'd have to miss 30 minutes of our recess. It doesn't matter if your parents didn't want you to be videotaped or you didn't want to, she just needed some information. She said you'd have to go to the office and do your work there without no distractions. But then she changed her mind and kept 'em in the classroom.

(a) How can you tell if your teacher likes you?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. One student offered an insightful response based on a description of teacher characteristics, including the teacher's willingness to encourage students to control their behavior:

I can tell by her attitude. She gives you lots of respect. She thinks about our feelings and wants you to learn how to control your attitude. In a way, she loves you. She'll be very, very nice to you. She'll call on you most of the time.

Other students mentioned concrete examples of rule enforcement (and lack of rule enforcement) and rewards they considered signs of their teacher liking them:

She's nice and she won't put your name on the board if you do one little mistake.

If you are playing with something and somebody takes it from you, she'll tell them to give the toy back. She'll stick up for the persons who had it first.

Because she gives us privileges like she lets us go to the office with a note or we get to write on the board.

(b) How can you tell if your teacher cares about other students?

The Assertive Discipline focus groups. On this prompt, students continued with the types of examples they offered in response to Question 13(a), mostly relating “liking” to rewards and classroom privileges but also including positive reinforcement the teacher gives while working with students on academic activities:

She tells you like if you’d done something good on your paper. She’ll tell you “good job. And if you pass the spelling test, you don’t have to do the spelling test over.

She might pull you back and say that your handwriting’s neat and keep doing that and stuff like that. But she would not say it loud.

She’ll let you do a paper over again. She’ll probably correct it and see the other things that I did wrong. Or if there was nothing, she would um, if she did it with a pencil, she would erase it and put the A or B on it like that. Sometimes if you take work home and you get it finished, she gives us an A. She will probably smile at you and say that you did a good job.

She keeps an eye on them. She’ll let you take something to the office that needs to be mailed and she might pick them more than she picks everyone else. She gives them privileges like if the cotton ball jar is halfway full, we get an extra recess.

She buys stuff for this drawing thing. She’ll put your name in the drawing box and you’ll get a prize or privilege. She will help them. If you get hurt a little, she’ll put a band-aid on sometimes. Sometimes she’ll listen to us.

The Constructivist focus groups. The students answered question 13 by referring to the teacher’s personality, teaching, and response chart. They said, “He’s funny. He tells jokes.” During the observation, the teacher used humor several times throughout the day, on several occasions when working individually with a student and sometimes with the whole group. Students made some additional comments about their teacher’s behavior in

class. They said,

Sometimes he'll go out to our lockers and he'll shut the door. And then he comes in looking mad 'cause we were doing something for the class like "inferring" and then if you guess why he was being that way, like infer, it is a learning game.

I like the response chart. He has a response chart and all our names are on it. He will use it when he asks a question and look on the chart to see whose turn it is to answer. And then he keeps it fair by checkmarks.

Table 14

Teacher Traits Students Like

| Assertive Discipline Classroom | Constructivist Classroom | Similarities |
|---|--|--------------|
| The cotton ball jar | He's funny and tells jokes | |
| Names in a drawing | He does a lot of role-playing when he teaches | |
| She gives out candy | | |
| She won't put our name on the board | | |
| We can go to the office with a note | | |
| We can write on the board | | |
| She gives us respect | | |
| She wants you to learn to control your attitude | | |
| She's nice to you | | |
| She'll call on you | | |
| <i>(a and b) How can you tell if your teacher cares about students?</i> | | |
| She keeps an eye on them | | |
| She'll pick on them more than anyone else | He uses a response chart to "keep things fair" | |
| She'll help them with their work and when they get hurt | | |
| Sometimes she listens to us | | |
| She'll let us do a paper over | | |

The students in the Assertive Discipline classroom recognize that the teacher shows she approves of them when she gives them rewards, special rewards, special privileges, and different forms of respect (Table 14). They may ask themselves how they should act in the context of the classroom in order to receive approval from their teacher and what they must do to avoid negative encounters with her. The comments from students in the constructivist classroom create a picture of their teacher as fair and approachable. They describe examples of relating to him on a personal level. According to their responses and the classroom observation, they do not hesitate to talk with him about any issue that concerns them. Research has shown that the way students think about the differences in the way they act when the teacher displays a negative affect toward them versus one perceived to be positive is perhaps the best indicator of student teacher relationship. Based on the findings from the focus groups in both classrooms, it is clear that students may become aware of the values behind their classroom rules, and that these values may cause them to examine not only the purpose of their behavior in the classroom but also the affect their behavior has on the teacher's behavior toward them. As students go through this process, they learn to do the right thing—or at least what to do to receive approval from the teacher.

Additional Findings and Summary

The answers given by the students supported the literature by Canter and Canter (1976, 2001) and DeVries and Zan (1994, 2002) by describing the types of environment in which both management approaches are developed and maintained. This conclusion was made possible by the wealth of information that emerged in the interviews with

students, which added greatly to the profile of the classrooms formed through the instruments. Both groups of students were receptive to the interview questions, expressed their views openly, and provided detailed examples of how they view their participation in the classroom. For example, students in the constructivist classroom indicated awareness that they were in charge of their environment and that they had a responsibility to find ways to work together and change their behavior through the various processes discussed throughout the interview responses. They said they feel free to discuss and negotiate alternative consequences that fit their situation. According to the student interview responses, their teacher supported them in this process. The students' beliefs also supported Daniels et al's (2001) and Valeski and Stipek's (2001) recommendations regarding teacher practices in that the constructivist teacher valued students' individual view.

Similarly, in the classroom set up for direct instruction, students in the Assertive Discipline focus groups demonstrated that instruction about classroom rules had taken hold. Students were able to offer specific examples of what the rules are, how they view the rules, the types of rewards offered for compliance with the rules, the consequences of rule-breaking (corrective actions), and what students can do to maintain a positive relationship with the teacher. The students indicated that they understood that the rules and consequences were there to help structure the classroom and make it run more smoothly. Moreover, students appeared to be saying that their relationship with their teacher depended upon their compliance with the rules.

One finding that I did not expect to emerge from conversations with these students was what they said about self-control. Based on the literature review, I assumed they would center their answers relating to self-control on following the rules, which they did. However, I did not expect them to provide additional examples of self-control used outside the classroom. This was an important finding in that by providing examples of their behavior outside the classroom, they were able to show two-way thinking and basic concepts of causality, as well as expressing feelings of differential treatment (See question 10). This supports Rohrkemper's (1984) Weinstein's et al. (1987), Van Scoy's (1994), and Woolfolk & Brooks' (1985) descriptions of third grade students and their ability to interpret their environment in abstract terms.

The study has revealed more differences between the two groups of students than similarities. The first major contrast made possible by the interviews and observations is that the students in the constructivist groups focused much less on rule compliance than the Assertive Discipline students. The constructivist students appeared to understand that the rules and consequences were there to help foster respect and cooperation among the students, develop their responsibility for their own actions, and motivate them to think about how others think and act.

These students also placed a greater emphasis on their view of their teacher as one who cares unconditionally about them as individuals. In the constructivist focus groups, the students became particularly excited as they described examples of how their teacher cared about them. When they spoke of their teacher's positive attributes, their view of

the teacher appeared to become more positive. Another significant finding related to the theme of teacher/student relationship was that students in the Assertive Discipline classroom focused on how the teacher treats them when enforcing rules, whereas the students in the constructivist classroom focused on how the teacher teaches (see especially Tables 12-14).

This study contributes new evidence that the rules, consequences, and behaviors of teachers will have a definite influence on the type of relationship the students have with each other and with the teacher. It seems apparent that the rules, consequences, and teacher's behaviors initiated more negative responses from the students in the Assertive Discipline classroom regarding their classroom experience as compared to the students in the constructivist focus groups, which effected how they interacted with each other and the teacher. On one hand, one may conclude that at the third grade level, students are becoming more independent and able to think more logically about the treatment they receive as compared to those around them, and thus are likely to offer criticisms. On the other hand, these findings could be interpreted to mean that when students are not given opportunities to develop their cognitive and social skills, they may tend to become more negative toward others, as in the Assertive Discipline students' descriptions of students when they misbehave in the classroom. These negative feelings may take either a passive form ("It makes me feel like I've got a headache and I want to cry") or an aggressive form (feeling "angry" or "PO'd;" wanting to "beat the living daylights out of them."). In both classrooms, the students indicated the need to exercise freedom, but the

Assertive Discipline students had to depend on their teacher to deal with the behavior of others, whereas the constructivist students had learned strategies for dealing with others on their own. This is a critical finding for teachers as they try to interpret their students' behavior and further, decide what classroom management approach is best for this age.

Possibly, the most important implication of the student/teacher relationship is the outcome that students in the Assertive Discipline classroom appear to be accountable to the teacher for their behavior, while the students in the constructivist classroom have learned to be accountable to themselves for their own behavior. The Assertive Discipline students did not have to do as much thinking about their behavior because the teacher already did much of that for them. However, in the constructivist classroom, students learned to develop their own sense of regulation by choosing techniques that would help them effectively interact with their environment and others. In addition, when the students evaluated their own behavior, it is interesting to note that the students in the constructivist classroom did not mention anything about receiving rewards or special privileges for good behavior or work well done. They viewed being "appropriate" as building positive relationships and learning to behave democratically by working together cooperatively. The findings suggest that students in the constructivist focus groups have learned to reward themselves when they have done a job well and do not rely as much on the teacher's approval as the Assertive Discipline students do. This may also result from their understanding of the levels of cooperation, which has increased their awareness of what it means to do something right and good without seeking any sort of reward at all (not even self-given).

One final issue closely ties to the student/teacher relationship is the noteworthy difference in the theme of fairness reflected in the students' remarks. It has been noted earlier that students in the Assertive Discipline classroom think that the way the teacher treats them is not fair sometimes, especially when they receive consequences for others' behaviors. In contrast, the only time students in the constructivist classroom talked about fairness was in the context of mentioning that the teacher wants everyone to have the opportunity to share their thinking with the class. This evidence suggests that the Assertive Discipline students think of *fairness* in the classroom as a negative reinforcement of behavior, one not evenly or consistently modeled by the teacher, whereas students in the constructivist classroom associate fairness with working out problems. Clearly, students at this age view fairness as something that is important to them. These students look to their teacher to define fairness and observe how it is modeled by their teacher, and because they interpret it to mean receiving equitable treatment, they adjust their behavior so that they can receive fair treatment (see section on students' views of classroom rules).

Based on the findings gathered in this study's observations and interviews, it can be concluded that students emulate their teacher's behaviors, that teachers define how to behave, and teachers regulate the degree to which students will develop skills for self-control. Therefore, it is clear that the skills for developing self-control in the classroom are largely determined by their teacher.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHERS' VIEWS

Chapter 5 presents the findings gathered from all the data-gathering methods used in the study: the classroom instruments, interviews with students and teachers, videotapes, and classroom observations. Chapter 5 deals with Research Questions 4 and 5, which reveal third grade teachers' views of their classroom management strategies within the two contrasting classroom types. This chapter is also organized according to the interview questions. Before the findings from these data sources are presented, a brief description of the Assertive Discipline and constructivist teacher's philosophies will be shared.

Specific interview questions are presented in numbered list form, including any follow-up probes asked if the interview questions were not discussed in adequate depth (see Appendix G). These follow-up questions are identified as (a), (b), etc. under each interview question. Implications of the findings will follow each section.

The Assertive Discipline Teacher

As the Assertive Discipline teacher and I sat down to discuss the interview questions, the teacher appeared to be quite enthusiastic about the kind and quality of management strategies she was providing for her students. She spoke positively about the rules in her classroom, the clear expectations she provides for her students, the classroom consequences, the students' self-control, and her relationship with her students.

During the observation, the Assertive Discipline teacher used direct instruction as her primary mode of delivery. She monitored students' work from her desk and

interacted with students only when they were off task. While she was teaching, the students sat quietly at their desks, most of them doing their work while others played with items in their desks when she was not watching. The teacher said she believed that “using direct instruction is my primary style of teaching, but I do use small groups only when students are working on projects.” She believed that she could “monitor students’ behavior more effectively when they were working individually at their own desks.” During the interview, she stated that her “primary purpose for teaching is to help students succeed academically” and that she “will do whatever it takes to help them.”

The Constructivist Teacher

The constructivist teacher declined the request to sit down to do the interview in the same way the interview was conducted with the Assertive Discipline teacher. He said that he would like to show me what his philosophy looked like in practice. Therefore, the teacher offered to answer the questions throughout the day as they fit with what he was doing with the children. He role-modeled the answers and stopped when the children were doing independent work to describe what was happening in the classroom and why.

The constructivist teacher’s style was very energetic in that he constantly moved around the room interacting with students. When he was teaching, the students frequently asked him questions, showed him their work, and shared personal experiences that were connected to what they were learning. He expressed that he was most concerned about his students developing academic and social skills resulting in less dependence on him. He described the rules in his classroom and explained how he provided clear expectations for his students, established classroom consequences,

helped students learn self-control, and built relationships with his students.

Interview Questions

1. What is your philosophy of effective classroom management?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. This teacher was quite specific in describing what she believes effective classroom management looks like. She said,

The teacher needs to be well-planned for the day. They need to know exactly what is going to be done with the students and if there's going to be group work. You have to have the groups ready. Whenever students do not follow through, there's consequences. Whatever the teacher has planned for the day, that is what we are going to do and we are going to accomplish it. That's pretty much it. And if the students do not follow through with your plans, there's consequences.

According to the teacher's responses, there was no doubt in her mind about her opinion that the teacher is in charge and that the students should be responsible enough to follow the teacher's plan, or face a penalty. This teacher's philosophy is compatible with the Canters' (1976, 2001) behaviorist approach to dealing with students. In fact, it is consistent with their assertion that the teacher should be the boss of the classroom, meaning that the students should adhere to the classroom structures authorized by the teacher.

The Constructivist teacher. As the morning began, the children were greeted by the teacher outside the classroom. After they came into the classroom and began reading the agenda posted on a chart board, the teacher came over to where I was standing and said,

Every morning, I sit on a stool outside of the classroom and as the children come into the room, each one of them does the Give Me an H. They can either give me a high five, a side hug, or a handshake. Every morning as they come in, I'm able to say "good morning," "that's a nice shirt," or I notice a new haircut. I think that's really important. When they leave at night, I say, "I hope to see you tomorrow." One student I said that to didn't show up again but moved away without my knowing about it. I may never see her again but the last thing she'll

remember is that he said I hope to see you tomorrow. I think that's an important message for kids.

After the morning greeting, as children began reading independently, the teacher described his philosophy of what a teacher is and how to protect the dignity of the child. He explained,

I believe the teacher is a leader and needs to model through his/her own behavior how to handle different situations. I also believe in having a democratic classroom where children are actively involved in determining how we want our classroom to be. Freedom and responsibility. I want to allow children choice, but it must always be tied to responsibility. If you choose not to be responsible then your freedom becomes limited.

You have to protect the dignity of the student. You can easily embarrass people and if you do, the students are not going to want to cooperate with you. They want respect. You ultimately want them responsible for their own behavior.

As the teacher explained his philosophy of effective classroom management, he mentioned an element of the classroom environment he believes is essential—music. He said,

We have a lot of music going on during their quiet time. It kind of sets a relaxing mood. I've heard that any kind of music is good as long as there are not words. Otherwise you'll get distracted. You avoid a lot of rock songs and the language they're using. We start our day like that and end the day with Happy Trails to You. It also is supported by brain research.

Although different themes emerged in the classroom management philosophies of the Assertive Discipline and constructivist teachers, the interview with the constructivist teacher was similar in that the teacher revealed a strong sense of certainty about his definition of effective classroom management: in this case, the belief that teachers should model the type of behavior they want their students to emulate, but that students ultimately decide how to act.

He believes that the ultimate goal is helping students see that their behavior is contingent upon responsibility for their choices, resulting in either freedom or barriers. It can be concluded that building relationships, protecting self-worth, and other aspects of the environment, are all important aspects of his philosophy of classroom management. This teacher's philosophy is much like what constructivist literature advocates for creating a sociomoral environment (DeVries & Zan, 1994; 2003).

Classroom Rules

2. How do you provide clear expectations to students?

(a) Tell me about the rules in your classroom.

The Assertive Discipline teacher. The teacher said that at the beginning of the school year, she posts rules on the bulletin board and makes sure that the students read them with her. She shared, "We go about giving different examples of what would be a time when a student was obeying that rule and what would be a time when they are not." When probed for an example, she described how a class would line up appropriately and how they were to walk in the hallway. She also mentioned,

I'll bring up a scenario about the teacher giving a lesson and ask what they think about the situation. Hopefully, the response would be you don't talk when the teacher or someone else in the classroom is talking.

When asked about the rules in the classroom, she read from the list of rules on the bulletin board. The rules were "be respectful and courteous to adults and students, do all assignments, stay on task and follow directions, keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself, and use appropriate language and appropriate behavior." In her description of the

bulletin board and her verbal examples, her approach is consistent with the Assertive Discipline model and the principle that teachers should tell the students exactly what they expect and what is acceptable and unacceptable.

The Constructivist teacher. The teacher's rules were defined as levels of cooperation; the teacher's descriptions of the levels were consistent with the students' descriptions of each level. The teacher said,

We start with four levels. The lowest level of cooperation, A, which is anarchy, and that's not acceptable in the classroom. Level B is bullying and bossy. And that level is unacceptable in the classroom. Levels C being conformity and D being democracy. Level C is when someone does something in order to get rewarded such as getting praise for doing a good job. Level D is what we try to do in the classroom. You do something because you know it is the right thing to do. I want the students to behave because it's the right thing to do.

Throughout the course of the day, the teacher would talk to individuals and ask what their level of cooperation was. He did this in a quiet and deliberate tone of voice, attempting, he said, to promote respect, fairness, and positive interactions among the teacher and students. Evidence gathered from the interviews and observation suggests that the levels of cooperation define the boundaries appropriate and inappropriate classroom behaviors rather than boundaries being defined by a list of specific rules.

(b) What are examples of appropriate student behaviors?

The Assertive Discipline teacher: The teacher answered by tying examples of appropriate behavior (following the rules) to her definition of self-control. Her students answered in like manner (See student interviews under Self-Control). She said,

Students should have their eyes on the speaker, listen without talking, stay on task and don't talk when the teacher is talking. Paying attention is a big thing. Paying attention to what's going on around you and not always turning around visiting. That is self-control.

The Constructivist teacher. The teacher did not share responses to this question.

(c) What are examples of inappropriate student behaviors?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. When asked to give examples of inappropriate behaviors, she restated the rules and did not provide additional information.

The Constructivist teacher. In answering this question, the teacher reported that inappropriate behaviors in his classroom are behaviors at levels of cooperation A and B. The teacher mentioned a few behaviors that had been discussed in class during the observation:

Inappropriate behaviors are when someone is constantly bothering people, bullying someone, not following the directions, disrupting the classroom, calling someone a name such as a liar, and getting involved in something that is not their business.

(d) What methods and approaches do you use to promote appropriate student behavior?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. According to the Canters (1976, 2001), whatever method or approach the teacher uses, it must be consistent and direct students' attention to appropriate behavior. This teacher used several methods and approaches such as using praise, using the cotton jar, stopping her teaching when she observed a problem, and being polite; her descriptions of her uses of each of these methods follow.

First of all, the teacher felt that using a lot of praise and making comments when she sees someone doing a good job promotes appropriate behavior. She said,

I'll either thank them for behaving or say, "Look at so-and-so. He's doing a good job of standing quietly" or "thank-you for your good behavior." I guess they learn appropriate behavior by being recognized, being praised, or by receiving consequences.

Second, the cotton jar, which is located on the teacher's desk, is used to promote appropriate behavior in the hallway or for getting students to turn their work in on time. She puts one or two cotton balls into the jar when students are behaving appropriately. When the cotton ball jar is filled up, the classroom has a party. She said, "We decide whether we're going to do a game or watch video. Students vote. And they are able to bring snacks."

She further explained that when the students get 100% on their papers, she writes their names on a piece of paper and then at the end of the week, she has a drawing. The person whose name is drawn gets a prize. She said, "That is to encourage them to read directions on their own." When asked if it worked, she said, "Sometimes. Some students just don't care."

Next, the teacher explained why she sometimes stops teaching during a lesson.

She said,

That catches them really quick. I may walk over to them, point to their paper. You're constantly trying to help them care about their work and you never give up on them. So either the consequences, my expressions, or walking over to them works.

Even though I did not observe the following, the Assertive Discipline teacher asserted that teachers should be polite, smile, and demonstrate good manners. She believes that teachers should give all students compliments about something they have done, are doing, or what they are wearing to help promote appropriate behaviors. She said, "It seems that politeness goes a long ways with them." According to the student interviews, students do watch her behavior to determine whether she is in a good mood or not, thus adjusting their behavior based on her mood.

Here is an example, then, of the findings revealing a difference between the way the teacher believes she relates to her students and her students' perceptions of her behavior. This finding lends support to the idea that teachers should investigate their own students' thinking about their teacher's behavior in order to determine the influence the behavior has on students' expectations and attitudes within the classroom.

The Constructivist teacher. The constructivist teacher said that to promote good behavior, he uses the levels of cooperation and talks with the students about their own expectations regarding classroom behavior. At the beginning of the year, they make four expectation charts. They are:

1. Why do we come to school? (to get to our dreams)
2. What makes a good student a good student?
3. What makes a good teacher a good teacher?
4. What makes a good class a good class?

He related how they develop the charts together as a class. He explained,

In teams, the students discuss the expectations and then we all share our ideas. I record the ideas on a chart and then we vote for the top five ideas in each area. We also write an "Our promise to Ourselves" which is very directed by the teacher. The promise talks about how we will care for ourselves and our room. Then when a child messes up I will often direct them to one of the charts and he/she will come back and share with me how he/she can improve. If someone doesn't understand why they are doing something, we talk about it and once they understand, then we move on.

One other method used to promote appropriate student behavior is proximity. This technique was used frequently during my observation. The teacher never stood in one place for any length of time. In explaining what I had observed, he said,

I try to move in the classroom a lot. I try to get away from that teaching area. I like to work behind them. You just get closer and a lot of times, they'll go "oops" and then get back to work.

(e) What methods and approaches do you use to prevent inappropriate behaviors?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. When probed about the methods and approaches she uses to prevent inappropriate behaviors, the Assertive Discipline teacher said she felt that talking to students about the consequences of their behavior and the impact it has on other people is important. However, during the observation, she did not talk to her students about the consequences or the impact their behavior had on others.

In addition, the teacher believes that students should be prepared by the teacher to meet the teacher's expectations for classroom behavior. She offered an example of how she does this, although the "preparation" appeared to be a reaction to behavior rather than a lesson in helping a student avoid a problem with behavior:

If a student comes up to me constantly when we're ready to do group work, well, what are you supposed to do with that? You ask them, "Are you supposed to do that? No." But you also tell them what the expectations are to the rule.

The Constructivist teacher. This teacher spoke at length in answer to the question about preventing inappropriate behavior; however, like the Assertive Discipline teacher's example, the constructivist teacher's examples focused on dealing with behavior after it has become a problem:

I empower them. I tell them that you have agreed to the rules and you had the chance to say no but you didn't, so you know what behaviors we've agreed on for our classroom. I ask them what our level of cooperation is and ask them, "How can we correct ourselves?" I'll tell them that I don't want to boss but you're at this level of cooperation and you haven't fixed it. So I'll say you can either do this at your seat or in the office. They have to write an essay on their behavior. By giving them the choice, it kind of defuses the whole situation and makes it more relaxed. After they've written their essay, then you check their understanding.

If their behavior continues, I'll take out a yellow form with a diagnostic form and ask them the same questions. This time the form goes into the child's folder. This brings up the heat because now they know that form is a keeper. I ask what

their level of cooperation is and I have to think about what I'm doing also. Do I need to change in some way to help this child? If the child gets a second yellow form, that one goes home to the parent. I feel like I keep barking at them and I really don't like it. But when things get serious, you see that change. If a child refuses to fill out the form, you tell them that you've been hired by the district to follow the district's expectations. And you understand the consequence of that choice. So you may have to go in front of the school board and explain your choice.

The forms are neither a punishment nor a time-out. It is to help them check for their understanding of their behavior and for how I'm teaching them. Also, if I know my guidance counselor's coming in today, we might work on I-messages or conflict resolution strategies.

The constructivist teacher was observed using each one of these methods and approaches in preventing further inappropriate behavior, with the exception of using the yellow form. It should be noted that during the observation, the teacher and a student went to the Peace Chair to conference about the student's behavior. Later on during that same day, the teacher followed up with the student to check with him about how his day was going.

(f) How are rules developed in the classroom?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. The rules used for this classroom are the same rules used throughout the whole school. The Canters (1976; 2001) stressed that the teacher should not use more than five classroom rules. Apparently incorporating the research on Assertive Discipline, the teacher in the present study has developed classroom rules called the Give Me Five Rules. In this classroom, the rules are posted on the bulletin board by the door along with the card system she has implemented. She explained,

I have a set of rules that I start out with. They are school-wide rules. And they are very general. All the students know exactly what is expected out of them in each

classroom. The teachers have different consequences to those rules, but the rules are all the same.

She noted something interesting in answering another question, and that was whether or not students are encouraged to assist in enforcing the rules. She stated,

When a student is tattling, I look at the purpose of the child when they tattle. Does this have to do with the safety of the child or is the child attempting to get someone in trouble? If it's once in a while, we do listen very closely to those students.

This response indicates that the teacher tends to evaluate reasons for student behavior and determines her response to them accordingly. Unlike the constructivist teacher, however, this teacher does not mention discussing with her students why they are tattling or offer alternative ways of handling their relationship with the person they are having a conflict with. In addition, during the observation students were observed to receive negative consequences from the teacher, without explanation, by either having their name written on the board or having a card pulled. These findings seem to contradict the teacher's earlier statement that she talks with the students when they display inappropriate behavior. Nevertheless, Canter and Canter (2001) would support this teacher's responses and behaviors. She is supposed to control all student behavior and provide appropriate levels of consequences based on the nature of the student's inappropriate behavior.

The Constructivist teacher. See answer to probe (g). The constructivist teacher answered question probes (f) and (g) together.

(g) How are classroom rules implemented?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. The teacher talked about the importance of going over the rules at the beginning of the year with the students, what it means to obey

the rules, and what it means to be respectful. She explained,

Once we go over the rules, they do not need to be gone over again, but once in awhile, I'll remind them. All students should know them. I tell the students that when they obey the rules they are also showing respect to the class. If an incident does come up at the beginning of the year when they don't follow one of the rules, they are warned and asked what rule did they break. That way the rules are reinforced and it reminds them not to do it again.

Based on this finding, it is clear that the students are not provided opportunities to shape their environment by being actively involved in the rule making process. The rules are consistent throughout the year. However, based on this comment, previous comments by the teacher, and the observation, one may assume that the teacher doesn't consistently talk with the students throughout the year about inappropriate behavior.

The Constructivist teacher. The constructivist teacher stated, "I teach cooperation, not discipline." He makes this distinction by involving the students in the process of developing the rules for the classroom. He mentioned that he starts with some general rules about safety and sets up the classroom expectations, but from that point on, the students are involved in developing the rules. He said,

We brainstorm rules, chart them, and then the students vote for the ones they want. We end up with five expectations for each chart. For example, we brainstorm what makes good students, then what makes a good teacher, and how we want our classroom to be. We all brainstorm and then they choose five. Once in a while I'll ask how they are doing and then they will ask how I'm doing. I want to build people up in the classroom and so this is the best process for my class. When we've got a problem I ask the students, "how should we handle this?"

The students are provided opportunities to shape their environment by being actively involved in the rule making process, not only at the beginning of the year, but throughout the entire year. During the observation, discussion took place along with the teacher's

explanation of the rules' purpose and the students' and teacher's responsibility in developing the following the rules. According to the teacher, everyone in the classroom is invested in this process through opportunities to reflect on and regulate their behavior appropriately. This is part of the democratic environment the teacher has established in the classroom.

Classroom Consequences

3. How do you address students who do not conform to your expectations in your classroom?

- (a) What types of consequences do you use for inappropriate behaviors?
- (b) What methods and approaches do you use when dealing with conflicts among students?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. The teacher answered question 3 in detail without much probing. She began by asserting the importance of teaching students to follow the rules and explaining what the consequences are for not doing so. She described what the Canters' (1976, 2001) advocate, establishing a discipline hierarchy of no more than five consequences that must be consistently followed with no exceptions. When a student doesn't follow the rules, the teacher first gives the student a warning and asks them what the rule is. She explained what would happen next:

I tell them what they are doing and write their name on the board because if I don't write their name, I have a tendency to forget who I warned. If a student continues to break a rule, the teacher pulls a card and the student misses 30 minutes of recess. During this time, the student either stands against the wall outside while other kids are out at recess or they go to the study lab which is in the third grade room and work on homework. Usually having the first card pulled remedies the situation. However, if I have to pull the second card, the student misses two recesses and I remind them of what the consequences are. Once the third card is pulled, the student goes to a

different third grade classroom and sits and when they come back into the room, they are sitting beside someone else. If they still have problems, their fourth card is pulled, they go to the principal and a letter is written to their parents.

The teacher does believe that sometimes there are more serious situations where the student should leave the classroom without going through the discipline hierarchy. These students, she said, have to leave the classroom immediately without any cards being pulled first. When probed for an example of what the student had to do in order to get that consequence, she said, “hitting someone, complete defiance, or being completely out of control.”

The Constructivist teacher. According to the teacher, while using several approaches when dealing with conflicts among students, he is careful to protect students’ self-image. If a student continually chooses to display inappropriate behaviors, the teacher does have a system in place to “put pressure on them to find alternative behaviors.”

When asked what kind of things he might do with such students, he said,

First, I bring them back to the Peace Chair and tell them that there is some kind of problem or that it seems like you’re in conflicts a lot. I then explain what I observed. Then I ask “what do you think is going on here?” Then they have five minutes to figure out how they are going to solve their problem. I ask them if they want some help? I make sure I tell them that they’re a good kid and smart kid. Sometimes if the student is having a hard time figuring out a solution, I might ask if I had their permission if our whole class could talk about ways to help him/her. If they said, “Yes” then we would have a class meeting and brainstorm ways we could help him/her.

When probed about his feelings concerning the use of tokens or rewards to help students conform to the expectations of the classroom, he said he believes that they are not worthwhile. He explained why:

If I used tokens or rewards, then students would be behaving out of conformity, which they would think that everything they do should be rewarded. I want them to behave because they think it is the right thing to do, not because they're going to get something for what they've done. For example, I had one student who was in special education and one of his other teachers controlled his behavior by having him earn pennies. Well, he refused to stay inside for recess and the teacher said that he would lose his pennies. He said, "Fine, keep my pennies!" and outside he went. They didn't mean anything to him.

Although the constructivist teacher does a lot of work with students to encourage them to think about their behavior, he realizes that others need stricter guidance. He said,

Sometimes people won't change until they are put in the fire. It depends on the culture. I have a discipline plan that was developed by Dr. Marvin Marshall called *Discipline without Stress, Punishments or Rewards*. I changed it a little. First of all when students are having behavior problems, I have the child go look at the posters developed as a class and then have them share how their behavior might improve. Then I talk to them individually, check for understanding, and ask what their level of cooperation is. If their level is unacceptable, I have them write an essay about how they plan to get back to an acceptable level and then they share it with me. I ask, "Why did you have to do this assignment?" If their behavior doesn't change, they write a self-diagnostic referral essay. The first one is handled by the teacher and student. The second one is mailed to the parent and the third one is kept in a folder in the classroom. If their behavior is still unacceptable, they go to the office.

It was observed that this teacher has a very quiet demeanor when dealing with students who are not following classroom expectations. He never raised his voice, nor did he belittle any students in front of their peers. Based on these findings, it is reasonable to conclude that the teacher believes in helping the students think about what they are doing, the impact their behavior has on others and themselves, and the alternative behaviors they could choose instead of disruptive behavior. As a result, students learn to become responsible for their own behavior.

Self-Control

4. How do attitudes of self-control develop?

- (a) What does it mean when a student has self-control?
- (b) How do students learn to control their own behaviors?
- (c) What management strategies do you use to help students learn self-control?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. The teacher answered question probes (a), (b), and (c) together. The teacher's response to these questions was consistent with the rules of the classroom. To her, self-control means following the rules. She said,

I guess self-control means that the student stays on task, their eyes are on the teacher, they listen and follow directions. Students learn to control their behaviors when I stop teaching and remind them what the rules are and the consequences. If I don't stop teaching, I'll get louder and they will lose respect for me. But I don't do this all the time because it loses its effect really easily. Sometimes I use proximity, but I guess I maintain as much calmness as I can and just work with the consequences.

The findings indicate that self-control in this classroom is regulated by the teacher and her reactions to her students' compliance or lack of compliance with the rules. It can be concluded that the students experience a largely unilateral environment where the teacher is the source of information about the need for control. Further, although the rules and consequences are predicable and consistent for the most part, students may not be given the opportunities to learn for themselves what self-control means, especially if it is regulated by the teacher.

The Constructivist teacher. The teacher answered each probe individually.

- (a) What does it mean when a student has self-control?

This teacher's definition of self-control focused largely on his role in helping students develop it. He said,

It takes lots of practice. It's learning how to control their emotions and their excitement. If they're learning self-control, they are also learning consequences for being out of control. It's being given freedom with very clear responsible

expectations and then being held to those expectations. I try to jump into that person's thoughts. For example, I ask, "Do you like to be bothered? Then do we want to do that to other people in our classroom?" I always call "I" the other side of the fence. When people have self-control, they will feel really bad when they mess up, not because they got into trouble but because they realize that they really messed up. I try to have them do perspective taking to force them to "Jump the Fence" meaning to see it from someone else's perspective or points of views.

- (a) How do students learn to control their own behaviors?

When probed about how he believes students learn to control their own behaviors, the teacher said, "I think that's what the level of cooperation system is. Through this experience, they learn self-control and that there are consequences and choices of behaviors."

- (b) What management strategies do you use to help students learn self-control?

When asked about the management strategies he uses to help students learn self-control, the first strategies that came to mind were the peace conference and Hutton money. About the peace conference technique, he said,

I use the peace conference. It's a lot of work and draining on me. But children need that in their development. Sometimes I talk with them as a whole group or individually and try to have them tell me what the problem is and how we can fix it. I also tell them what I've noticed and how it is affecting the whole group. Sometimes we sit down and brainstorm as a group what we can do to help our classmates think about their conflict and what we can do to help them solve their conflicts.

He also explained in great detail the uses and purposes of what he calls "Hutton money."

At the beginning of each month, children have little bags and they get paid \$40 each month. They don't have to earn it, they just automatically get it. They use it for different things. One of the things is if they leave the room during work time or teaching time, then they have to sign out and they have to pay at the end of the day. Every day the amount changes. Today, it's 28 cents. So the boy would go up and sign their name, what time they're leaving and what time they get back. And then they have to figure out the difference between the time they left and the time when

they came back into the room. The reason why I'm doing it is I want them handling money all year long. I want them making change.

And then on time, I want them doing time. Not just regular time, but they're having to do time all the time. At the end of the day what happens is that one of the jobs is called desk inspector. We've talked about keeping our desks in order. If their desk looks good, then they get a green card. We call them go cards. And on the go cards are written different amounts of money. Then they can go get their things from their lockers. When they come back into the room, they have to count this amount out to the bakers. Then they are able to go. At the end of the month, we have store day. Each family donates \$2. I go out to the Dollar General and Wal-Mart and I buy things. And we'll have snacks and toys. We'll have posters and then we set up our math days and do store day. We have shopkeepers and shoppers. We'll go for about 15 minutes and then we switch. They can use their money then and actually buy things. It's just working math skills. We also have what's called a garage sale. They can bring in cookies or they can sell something that they have brought from home and that they don't want anymore. During store day, they have to pay taxes. So then we talk about what taxes are and how it's used. They also have bills so they have to pay for the lighting and the water they use.

The findings resulting from the constructivist teacher's discussion of classroom rule development and enforcement show a teacher working to help students learn to regulate their own behavior through opportunities he provides for them to understand the impact their behavior has on others and themselves. His primary methods of achieving his goals for the students include helping them understand the level of cooperation system, conducting peace conferences to help them understand the perspectives of others, and providing them with the freedom to take responsibility for their own behavior. It can be concluded from this evidence that the students are experiencing a largely democratic environment where the teacher and students work together to learn what self-control means for themselves as a learning community.

Teachers' Behaviors

5. What do you do to maintain effective management?

(a) What are examples of effective classroom behaviors you use when dealing with students?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. The Assertive Discipline teacher answered question probes (a) and (b) together. She said,

A teacher needs to have a sense of humor, be polite, be prepared for what their behaviors are going to be like, use the card system, and find ways to make them really care about their work and do it through praise. You just never give up on them 'cause they'll know when you have.

During the classroom observation, the teacher displayed her use of the card system she mentioned. She put names on the board when students displayed inappropriate behavior. She also put cotton in the cotton ball jar when students displayed appropriate behavior in the hallway. In addition, during the interview, she mentioned that when everyone returned their homework and when everyone got 100% on a paper, she would put additional cotton in the cotton ball jar. Based on the interviews and observation, students worked hard to earn a cotton ball. Students seemed to become more attentive to what she was saying and doing after she managed their behavior by using these strategies.

When probed about examples of less effective classroom behaviors she uses when dealing with students, she said,

When you lose your patience and get louder you lose them totally because they'll lose respect for you. They begin to think that you really don't care for them. But they know how to push my buttons.

The findings corroborated the teacher's belief about her students' reactions to anger and yelling. These were behaviors students mentioned that they would change about her even though they felt that teachers had to sometimes get angry and yell so that students would listen and pay better attention (See student interviews under Teachers' Behaviors).

These findings provide evidence that this teacher uses extrinsic means for controlling student behavior: students worked hard to receive rewards and to avoid anger and punishment. Even though she specifically mentioned that losing patience and yelling were inappropriate, she herself did not demonstrate how to control her behavior when her “buttons were pushed.” Because students emulate their teacher’s behaviors, they too may resort to anger and yelling when their “buttons are pushed.”

The Constructivist teacher. The constructivist teacher’s answer to question probe (a) was that he uses district referral forms for inappropriate behaviors, but he mainly tries to model the behavior he wants from his students. He said,

I take any problems to the kids first and we come up with a plan. I also change members within a group, use a lot of proximity, shake hands with students, and try to build a positive relationship with them. On Friday, we also have a lunch brunch. It is so we can get to know each other and discuss the reasons why we behave the way we do.

Based on these findings, it is obvious that the constructivist teacher believes in empowering the students whenever possible and that he wants to work with children versus against the children whenever there are problems.

(b) What are examples of less effective classroom behaviors you use when dealing with students?

The Constructivist teacher. In his answers to this question, the theme emerged of a teacher reevaluating his own behaviors in order to use them more effectively, along with examining behaviors that he needs to be consistently conscious of eliminating from his teaching. He reported,

When I first started using the forms, I didn't have the students check for understanding of how their behavior was affecting everyone, or themselves. I had to learn that. If you embarrass them, they're not going to want to cooperate with you. I need to think more about the yellow forms and maybe rip them up at the end of the quarter instead of keeping them all year long. You start feeling stress when you have to deal with inappropriate behavior everyday from one child. Sometimes I have to think about the tone of my voice that maybe it was a little too harsh and taking charge without student input. I don't want to be the king of the classroom and what I say is the law. That's not building the type of environment or relationship with students that are healthy for any of us.

(c) What are examples of non-verbal behaviors you use in the classroom to manage students' behaviors?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. When asked about the type of non-verbal cues she uses in the classroom to manage students' behaviors, she said,

I use proximity, tap them on the shoulder, and point to their paper. Then they notice that you're not going to talk over them. I guess maintaining as much calmness as you can and work with the consequences.

During the classroom observation, she used each one of these cues. Whenever someone was off task or talked out of turn, she would stiffen her body, walk more quickly, and change her facial expression from calm to stern. The students quickly responded to her and changed their behavior. However, it should be noted that when the teacher wasn't looking, students once again were off task.

The Constructivist teacher. This teacher uses a lot of non-verbal behaviors that he presented as receptive, non-threatening, humorous, and at times, strict. He said,

I try and get proximity. Try and get close to them. I move around in the classroom a lot and try to get away from that teaching area. I like to work behind them so I can see what's happening. The proximity control really works. I sometimes touch my finger to my lips for quiet, a friendly shaking of head, and a touch on the shoulder. I sometimes look at children in a funny, wondering what you are doing way. That gets them thinking.

During the classroom observation, he used each one of these cues. Throughout the course of the day, he was always walking around the room, speaking to students in groups or with those doing individual work at their desks. At one point, one student was off task and the teacher changed his facial expression from calm to inquisitive, asking him, “What assignment are you working on? Is this what you should be doing? Do you need my help?” When the whole class seemed to be off-task, he would ask, “What level of cooperation are you working at? What level do we need to be working at so we can learn more effectively?” Students responded in a calm manner and the teacher continued to circulate among the students.

(d) What type of relationship do you feel you have with your students?

The Assertive Discipline teacher. According to this teacher, she feels committed to her students. She expressed the belief that a teacher shouldn’t give up on any of them no matter what type of problems they are having. She said,

At this age, they have a real desire to learn about anything, and that helps. You’re constantly trying to find ways to make them care more about their own work. You have students that just naturally because their parents are pushing them, and others, the work doesn’t really affect them nor do the consequences. But you can’t give up on them.

She said that she feels like she has a good relationship with the students because she said, “I look forward to coming to work. It has a lot to do with the atmosphere and how it’s going.”

The Constructivist teacher: This teacher gave specific examples of the type of relationship he feels he has with his students:

I think I have a good relationship with them. I believe our relationship should be based on mutual respect. One way to establish positive relationships with them is the

Friday lunch bunch or munch clubs. I eat with them, joke around with them, and listen to them. It gives them a feeling that you're approachable.

I think that they know that I do like them and want them to do well. And I think that sometimes if I do have to get on them because they know that, I think that they can handle that versus someone who they might feel like "you don't like me." I try to respect them and they try to respect me.

I think they know I care about them and not just school stuff. They come up and talk about basketball or what they're interested in and I listen. I listen to them and talk about their outside activities, new shirt, things that's really important to them.

The teacher's responses point to a theme of building a teacher/student relationship based on trust and caring about students as individuals. According to his students, they also valued this type of relationship.

Conclusion

The review of the literature indicates that Assertive Discipline teachers implement classroom management techniques that gain students' cooperation by using rewards and corrective actions. By doing so, Canter and Canter (1976, 2002) stated, teachers will significantly decrease discipline problems. Based on the findings from the teacher interview and observation, this teacher has implemented such techniques in her classroom and feels that they work to control behavior problems. She said, "The students know what the rules and consequences are. These methods work really well for controlling behavior."

Even though the students do not have input into the making of rules in their classroom, findings indicate that they were allowed to vote on the type of activity they can have when the cotton ball jar is filled. The teacher gives them a choice between two activities. This is one of few opportunities students have to express freedom of choice and offer input into their classroom activities; however, the teacher did comment that

“during the time when the activity takes place, behavioral problems are pretty much non-existent.” This finding is significant as it strongly suggests that when student input is valued by the teacher, students may feel a stronger sense of responsibility to behave appropriately. One may conclude that in order to create an environment where student misbehavior is decreased, then, teachers need to be more responsive to any input provided by the students.

An additional finding creates a more complete picture of the Assertive Discipline teacher’s relationship with her students, and is therefore important. The Assertive Discipline teacher does try to build a relationship with students by talking to them about interests they have outside of the classroom. Establishing positive relationships with students is advocated by the Canters (2001), and this teacher feels that her behavior establishes positive interactions with her students. This was an unexpected finding, as I assumed that in the Assertive Discipline teacher, who bases her classroom management more on authoritarian regulation of student behavior compared to the constructivist teacher, would indicate that she has difficulty in establishing positive relationships with her students. Just the opposite was found. Her students also indicated that they had a positive relationship with their teacher except for when she became angry and yelled (See student interviews under Teacher’s Behaviors). I would conclude that as long as the students were not recipients of their teacher’s anger, they viewed their relationship with her as positive.

In contrast, results indicate that the constructivist teacher implements classroom management techniques that provide students with the opportunities to develop

cooperative peer relationships. As a result, there is strong evidence that the students in this classroom begin to assign meaning to their behavior by understanding the views of others and developing convictions regarding social and moral issues (See Chapter 6 for a thorough discussion). It should be noted that the constructivist teacher has implemented techniques in his classroom that provide students the opportunities to build these relationships. These are the techniques that govern the structure of the classroom. The findings are very consistent in indicating that the teacher's relationship with his students enables them to function in a positive environment that is, at least in part, one of their own making.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 6 explores the major themes that emerged from the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and their implications for research and practice.

The four major themes that evolved from this research were the following:

1. The teachers have different classroom management goals that align with the theoretical underpinnings of their respective approaches.
2. Students' definitions of self-control align with their teachers' definitions.
3. Students' views toward both their academic work and their peers are influenced by their teachers.
4. Students' views of their teacher's classroom management strategies sometimes differ from their teacher's.

Teachers' Classroom Management Goals are Different

A major theme found in the study of the two classrooms was that the teachers' goals in managing classroom behavior to help students develop self-control are different and are compatible with the literature dealing with each teacher's respective philosophy, Assertive Discipline and constructivism. As this section will show, there are major differences between the teacher's goals, their beliefs about who should regulate students' behavior (teachers or students themselves), the approaches used to achieve those goals day to day, and the students' responses to their teacher's management strategies in the two classrooms.

Discussion about this theme is centered around the major differences between a) the teachers' goals and strategies for achieving those goals and b) students' responses to their

teachers' goals.

Teachers' Goals and Strategies for Achieving those Goals

Based on the results of the interview and my observations of the classroom, it appears that the Assertive Discipline teacher's primary goal with regard to classroom management was to secure her students' obedience. She appeared to adopt this goal because it served her primary purpose of helping students succeed academically. She believed that she was the "boss" of the classroom, which meant she was responsible for preparing adequately for each class session and for being ready to follow through with appropriate consequences for her students' actions. She stated in the interview that she would "do whatever it takes to help them succeed" academically.

In order for the Assertive Discipline teacher to secure her students' obedience, she implemented rules (the Give Me Five Rules), consequences (i.e. pulling cards, names on board, running laps), and rewards (the cotton jar, prizes, recognition and praise) that were "consistent no matter what the situation," and she did so without student input.

Consistent with her emphasis on obedience at any given moment, the Assertive Discipline teacher did not provide opportunities for her students to discuss the impact of their behaviors on others or themselves. This implies to me that the students depended on the teacher to define what behaviors were appropriate and inappropriate, which leads me to believe that they were powerless, thus relying on the teacher to make behavior decisions for them.

During my observation, the Assertive Discipline teacher also displayed verbal behaviors (yelling out the name of a student who seemed to be off-task, another time looking at different students who were playing in their desk and saying, "I wouldn't do

that if I were you”) and nonverbal behaviors (looking mad, walking very rigidly, and using proximity) through which to control students. She said during the interview that “either the consequences, my expressions, or walking over to them works.” She also said that she tried to “maintain as much calmness as I can and just work with the consequences.”

In contrast, the constructivist teacher’s primary goal with regard to classroom management appeared to be the development of self-regulation in his students. He said when students are learning self-control, they are also learning the consequences for being out of control. It’s being given freedom with very clear responsible expectations and being held to those expectations. I try to jump into that person’s thoughts.”

During my interview and observation, he worked to achieve his goal by role-modeling ways each student could use “his/her own behavior . . . to handle different situations,” using the terminology he wanted students to use when talking to each other about problems, and implementing the various strategies to teach students how to independently negotiate solutions that would best fit each situation (see theme 2 for additional evidence).

In order for the constructivist teacher to help his students develop self-regulation, he implemented approaches that encouraged his students to be responsible for their own behavior, giving his students the freedom to work out problems and find solutions. Approaches he used to carry out his goal were the I-Message, Peace Chair, Decision Game, Levels of Cooperation, proximity, and self-diagnostic referral forms. Another approach he used was to elicit student input. He would have discussions with his students about characteristics of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, what they look like, how

they contribute to the classroom climate, and the impact these behaviors have on the students and their peers, in hopes that they would develop personal convictions about the rules in their classroom and ultimately develop self-control, which was his primary goal.

Another example of what the constructivist teacher does to promote self-regulation is his handling of “on-task” vs. “off-task” behavior. His expectation is that the students will use the Levels of Cooperation to assess the overall classroom climate and individual behavior during instruction. While the teacher helps define what these levels are, he gives the students the freedom to identify their specific level of functioning at any given time. As described in Chapter 4, the classroom observation presented several opportunities to view students’ verbal self-assessments.

The findings provide clear evidence that each of the two classroom management approaches offers teachers a systematic plan for dealing with student misbehavior. The rules and consequences developed by the teachers were modeled and explicitly taught to the students. The results of those teachings are clearly evident in the observation and student interview responses. The Assertive Discipline teacher modeled and taught the rules and consequences at the beginning of the year and then enforced them with consequence and rewards throughout the rest of the year. Because of the teacher’s descriptions of her approach and the students’ descriptions of their responses to her approaches, I believe that she attained her students’ obedience by dictating to them how to behave. Some ramifications of this fact include negative responses on the part of the students, as previously indicated; these responses will be discussed in greater detail throughout themes 2 and 3.

In comparison, the constructivist teacher not only modeled and taught the rules and consequences at the beginning of the year, but revisited them daily throughout the course of the school year. I believe that he was conscious of his students' cognitive and social development as third grade students. As they begin to think more logically, as third graders do, the rules and consequences are designed to be used as guidelines for the development of perspective-taking and self-control, both of which third graders are very capable of developing. As a result, these students are continually learning about themselves and others and developing personal convictions about why they use rules and the purpose for those rules.

It seems unlikely that the Assertive Discipline students have developed personal convictions about their own behavior because their teacher did not provide opportunities for them to discuss the impact of their behaviors on others or themselves. Therefore, the students did not express beliefs about the rules other than to say that their teacher was right to use the rules and that by following the rules they could avoid punishment. Additional support for the conclusion that the Assertive Discipline students lack personal conviction about the rules is that the Assertive Discipline students offered several examples of behavior that agrees with their teacher's rules even though they disagree with those rules.

Students' Responses to their Teachers' Goals

In the Assertive Discipline classroom, the students responded to their teacher's approaches in various ways: they reported why rules were important ("helps the class be quiet;" "helps us get our work done on time"). However, they also reported physical problems whenever the teacher yelled ("I've got a headache") and anger toward rule-breakers ("I'm mad at the student. I feel like I shouldn't get into trouble. It makes me

PO'ed.”). Fairness was also an issue for the students. They reported that they wished for improvement both in the teacher's ability to assign blame for rule breaking and to assign consequences equally for those who didn't follow the rules. Some said, “I get mad at the teacher when she puts my name on the board but I didn't do it and somebody else did. If we're bad, she doesn't treat us all the same.” Another student recalled a situation in which he was trying to help with an overhead screen and the hook broke. He said, “The teacher got angry at me and I didn't do it on purpose.” These responses suggest that at some point, the students could rebel against teacher-directed rules and develop negative relationships with peers (see themes 2, 3, and 4 for further discussion). In spite of these responses, however, students believed that their teacher's approaches were ones that helped them behave appropriately.

In contrast, the constructivist students' responses to their teacher's approaches indicated that they were developing personal convictions (“I feel bad when I do something wrong so I tell my mom and dad” and “Talking about the problem is better than fighting”), an understanding of others' perspectives (“I feel bad for them”), and ability to take ownership of a problem (“I try to fix the problem”). These students were encouraged to be responsible for their own behavior and to “fix problems” together. These examples lead me to believe that the teacher had implemented approaches that were compatible with his goals, and could thus lead to further development of students' ability to self-regulate (see themes 2, 3, and 4 for further discussion).

Students' Views of What it Means to be in Control

Another important theme that evolved from the findings was that the students' definitions of self-control are practically identical to their teacher's. Dewey (1916/1966)

said that it is easy to conform to the rules of others, but in order to be in control of oneself, one must learn to think for one's self.

Students in the Assertive Discipline classroom defined someone who was in control exactly as their teacher did, as someone who knew what the rules were and followed them. These students also understood that if someone was out of control, that person would receive consequences for their behavior. Students said that by receiving consequences or watching what happened to other students when they did not follow the rules, they learned self-control.

Most of the students' comments were restricted to describing their self-control in relation to their teacher's presence. There was little evidence to suggest that students had developed an internal sense of self-control. Rather, they relied on an external source of measurement (their teacher's behavior) as their gauge for either being in control or out-of-control. Self-control was largely defined by the teacher without student input, and her students used words similar to hers to define self control, such as "following the rules." For students, self-control also included not fighting or yelling, raising your hand, doing all assignments, and being respectful. These were all behaviors monitored closely by their teacher, which further suggests that these students were not allowed to think for themselves. The Assertive Discipline students may feel that they are in control because they follow the rules, but they have neither been given the opportunities to question an authority's approaches to classroom management, nor learned to become self-reliant to monitor their own behavior and display appropriate behavior because they feel it is the right thing to do independent of what the teacher has dictated.

In comparison, students in the constructivist classroom defined someone who was in control as someone who “practiced a lot” and “tried to fix their own problems.” Students viewed the rules the teacher set up, such as the I-Message, holding classroom meetings, practicing conflict resolution, and using the Peace Chair, as effective ways to help them handle their problems, ways that taught them to negotiate consequences for themselves. Because these students worked alongside their teacher, they were able to attach personal meaning to the rules and to understand the impact rules had on themselves and others. This is important because when the constructivist teacher provided opportunities for his students to learn how to be responsible for their own behavior and develop personal convictions about moral issues as they relate to rules and other students, they seemed to be developing an internal sense of self-control. Another strategy he used to help students develop an internal sense of self-control was asking the students what level of cooperation they were at (A, B, C, D) in order for them to assess their own level of control and adjust behavior accordingly.

In order for the teacher to help students develop self-control, he modeled how self-control was to be defined in the classroom and followed up with opportunities for the students to put the definition into practice. Part of his definition, for example, was feeling a sense of ownership in how the classroom is run, so he involved them in the process of making additional rules (such as the classroom agreements) and asking everyone to take responsibility for implementing the class’s decisions.

During the interview, the constructivist students’ ability to articulate logical reasons for the approaches their teacher used, as well as their independent use of classroom procedures for maintaining control, illustrated that the teacher’s explanations and role-

modeling had taken hold and were being acted upon by students as they constructed personal meaning. Students' comments indicated that they agreed that their teacher's behaviors and approaches taught them to take responsibility for their own behavior and that they in turn felt a responsibility to their peers and to their teacher. They also expressed the belief that their teacher supported them in this process. Because the students made several positive references to their teacher helping them in various situations, I can conclude that establishing a positive teacher/student relationship is critical in helping students learn to take responsibility to work together and discuss and negotiate alternative consequences that fit their situation.

In Chapter 2, Dubelle (1995) was quoted as saying that "self-control is a predictor of interpersonal understanding." My data leads me to believe that Dubelle may be right. However, I can only make assumptions, as my study did not survey interpersonal understanding. It is my belief that a person can behave toward others as if they are in control, as the Assertive Discipline students did, but not understand that they have the freedom and power to behave not because a certain behavior is dictated by a teacher, but because they themselves feel it is the right thing to do. The start of interpersonal understanding is treating classmates a certain way because they have established their own guidelines for rules, and consequences.

However, I believe that before students can develop true interpersonal understanding, they need to learn guidelines for appropriate behavior. As these are learned, it is my belief that children will eventually develop an internal sense of control built upon an understanding of the perspectives of others. However, these are my beliefs as a result of the findings. What cannot be determined from the findings of this study is whether self-control helps students develop interpersonal understanding, or interpersonal

understanding helps students develop self-control. I can only note that interpersonal understanding appears to be a core part of the constructivist teacher's definition of self-control, and that his students exhibited interpersonal understanding in their behavior because they were allowed to experience cooperative strategies such as negotiating with others and reflecting on how their behavior affects others.

If teachers view learning self-control as developing student capabilities beyond obedience, such as promoting respect for all members of the classroom and understanding others' perspectives, only one of the approaches in this study appears to make that possible. It is the approach in which the teacher has discussions with students about characteristics of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, what they look like, how they contribute to the classroom climate, and the impact these behaviors have on the students and their peers.

Students' Attitudes Toward Their Academic Work and their Peers

Are Influenced by Their Teachers

The Assertive Discipline teacher's emphasis was mainly on academic work in her interview responses; the constructivist teacher's emphasis in the interview was mainly on students' peer relationships, although he stated that he was most concerned about his students developing academic and social skills.

Evidence emerged from the observations and student comments in both classrooms, however, to show that students' views (as reflected in their verbal remarks) and behaviors (as witnessed during the observations) toward both their academic work and their peers reflect their teacher's attitudes and behaviors.

Students' Views of Their Academic Work

As a result of my findings, I believe that students' views of their academic work is influenced by their teacher's attitudes and behaviors, which are driven by their teacher's goals. Two examples of students' views of academic work from the Assertive Discipline classroom and one example from the constructivist students' views will be discussed.

The Assertive Discipline teacher stated that she was very concerned with academics; although I did not specifically ask the students how they felt about academic classroom work, they voluntarily mentioned the importance of staying on task frequently. The findings make it fair to conclude that at least, students believe that working on academic assignments is the most important part of their school day. No evidence is available to make conclusions about their enjoyment of their academic work, the importance they place on it in their lives in general, or other aspects of the work that would allow a broader interpretation of their views.

In order to communicate her beliefs about the importance of academic lessons, the Assertive Discipline teacher set very strict limits on student behavior so that she could get through her daily lessons. Discipline measures including yelling were used when students "were too busy playing in your desk and doing something else besides homework." As a result, students appeared to have some differences of opinion with their teacher about how they could do their work most effectively, one student pointing out that getting up from the desk might be necessary for a work-related reason. The student said, "I wish we could get out of our seats to sharpen our pencil. Then you could get up and sharpen your pencil when it's really dull without having to raise your hand." This wish relates to freedom to keep a basic school supply ready as needed. However, when

the students mentioned their academic work, they consistently reflected their teacher's priorities in comments such as, "If we are not doing the work, we are bad students." The student who expressed the wish to get up and sharpen her pencil as needed even echoed her teacher's desire to maintain order during the execution of lesson plans when she added, "I wouldn't want 'em to be up in the middle of the assignment." Other comments illustrated the link in students' minds between their beliefs about the importance of staying on task and their actions: "We have to do our work and do it quietly to get it done."

The teacher's actions in the interest of her academic priorities may have had an unintended effect; it forced students to curtail not just any off-task behavior, but also in some cases to limit their engagement in academic work. For example, asking questions and writing are two important learning activities. Students mentioned "asking a question" and "sharpening their pencil" as actions that depend on the teacher recognizing them and giving permission; however, in attempting to maintain control, the teacher may not always give students permission. In situations such as these, it appears that students are powerless and prevented from getting their needs met. This could interfere with the student/teacher relationship.

In one case, a girl working at her desk started to get up without raising her hand to sharpen her pencil. After she realized her mistake, she raised her hand, and said, "Oops!" The teacher never called on her again when she raised her hand that day. Perhaps the student may react to this in various ways. In the best case, she might begin to keep extra pencils on hand. In the worst case, she may avoid raising her hand again for fear of being ignored again, and/or she may develop feelings of anger toward her teacher.

In contrast to this incident, when the teacher smiled or gave students a good grade or prizes, students smiled more, asked more questions, and based on the facial expressions and posture I observed, appeared to listen more attentively. Clearly, students in the Assertive Discipline classroom watched their teacher for her mood changes and deliberately adjusted their on-task behavior accordingly. The students' responses to their teacher's behavior lead me to conclude that these responses are fear-driven. The students seem to be constantly monitoring themselves in relationship to what their teacher is doing and saying only to protect themselves from classroom consequences. This conclusion is further supported by the students' responses they had toward their peers and to many of their responses to the classroom rules and consequences the teacher implemented.

In light of these examples, I would question what the Assertive Discipline students will do academically in the future: continue to believe that consistent concentration on academic work is very important, or possibly begin to fear taking "risks" in class like raising their hands and asking questions, fear which might limit their academic achievement.

In contrast to the reflection of academic priorities in the Assertive Discipline students' comments, few direct mentions of academic work were found in the constructivist students' transcripts. This implies that academics were not at the forefront of these students' thinking about school as they were for the Assertive Discipline students, but it is hard to determine anything more about the constructivist students' attitudes toward their academic lessons.

Even though I observed students learning in several areas of academics (the teacher working individually with students at their desks, students and teacher talking about what

“inferring” meant, students reading at their desks, students frequently asking him questions, showing him their work, and sharing personal experiences that were connected to what they were learning), the students volunteered only one comment about their teacher’s approach to academic content during the interviews. They said that sometimes their teacher would role model what he was trying to teach them by making it a “learning game.” He would act something out and they had to guess what he was doing.

With the strong emphasis on social and moral development in this classroom, the data could be used to reinforce claims in the literature that constructivist teachers tend to place too little emphasis on academics. Spatig (1996) argued that in the constructivist classroom the focus is mainly on creating a sociomoral environment at the expense of academics. Brooks and Brooks (1999) also argued that teachers in this type of classroom sometimes abandon their curriculum to pursue the whims of their students.

Because academic learning was observed and mentioned by the students and the teacher to a lesser degree than sociomoral development, the study may offer some support for these claims, though I was not able to form any conclusion about whether or not the constructivist approach in general is less academically rigorous than the Assertive Discipline approach. An important direction for further research would be to explore the question of whether placing relationship building at the forefront of students’ learning and development may teach students to place less value on academic achievement or may in any way detract from academic learning and skill building.

Students’ Views and Behavior Toward Their Peers

In the Assertive Discipline classroom, where the teacher put emphasis on obedience, students’ views of their peers and relationships with each other seemed to be somewhat

contingent upon whether or not they followed the rules. In the constructivist classroom where the teacher put considerable emphasis on relationships, students' views of their peers and relationships with each other were contingent upon engaging in perspective taking.

In this section, the description of students' views in the Assertive Discipline classroom focuses on classroom control and whole-class punishment, both relating to peer pressure. The description of students' views in the constructivist classroom focuses on perspective-taking as modeled by their teacher.

The observations and interviews supported Davidman and Davidman's (1984) assertions that the Assertive Discipline teacher may use methods students view as unreasonable for dealing with student behavior, such as yelling, punishing the whole class for one person's inappropriate behavior, and punishing the whole class when one student does not get the answers right the first time, even though the Canters (2002) also view yelling as an illogical method for dealing with students. The Canters stated that the assertive teacher should remain calm in all situations. The Assertive Discipline students believe that their teacher cares about them, but when she does not remain calm, or does something students see as unreasonable, their actions and emotions are affected in ways that should be considered carefully. Important evidence of this appeared in the students' behaviors toward and comments about their peers.

Classroom control. Students sometimes helped the teacher maintain classroom control by participating in rule enforcement, as in reprimanding a classmate with a "Sshh, be quiet," looking at the person talking ("look at them mad"), telling them to stop, or if they don't stop, telling the teacher what they've been doing. What I observed was that many of these behaviors were similar to the teacher's, and this imitation can be viewed as

a positive form of participation in influencing classroom behavior. The teacher may also view this participation as positive in that she has established a classroom climate where everyone is helping each other follow the rules, whereas the students may view this as positive because they can remind each other, instead of the teacher reminding them, when they are not following the rules. When they are doing the reminding, chances are that they will not receive a negative consequence from the teacher, unless someone “tells on them.” Moreover, they are more likely to receive rewards. Several students remarked that they help enforce the rules “so we can get more cotton balls.” However, one negative consequence that may result when peers are reminding each other of the rules is that their relationships may become strained; students may begin to feel that everyone is watching each other for inappropriate behaviors, which instills feelings of constantly being on-guard.

Whole-class punishment. The Assertive Discipline teacher believed that punishing the whole class was another useful way to put pressure on those students who “were misbehaving to change their behavior because peer pressure sometimes works better than pressure from a teacher.” Reactions that resulted from this form of punishment were, for the most part, negative. Even though the students acted as the teacher hoped they would and commented that they would do the same thing as their teacher if someone misbehaved, many of them responded negatively to some of her behaviors, especially when they felt they had to pay for something a classmate did. Although there is no evidence the teacher anticipated or wanted this result, the technique sometimes prompted negative feelings toward their peers, illustrated in statements such as “I get PO’ed” and “I feel like beating the living daylights out of them,” and negative feelings toward

themselves in statements such as “I feel bad” and “I feel like crying.” Many of the comments tied the students’ anger to the whole class receiving punishment because it meant losing a reward. Peer pressure may in fact serve an important role in maintaining classroom discipline so that students can focus on learning. As for the teacher’s belief that punishing the whole class encourages a positive use of peer pressure, she appears to be right to a point. Students did model their behavior after their teacher’s by participating in reprimanding fellow students or telling them to “Shhh.” However, the larger consequences of this peer pressure should be considered. Students’ negative responses regarding whole-class punishment were not directed at her; rather they were directed at those who got the whole class into trouble with their inappropriate behavior. The students’ involvement with other students’ misbehavior by attempting to “shhh” them or developing negative feelings toward them was primarily based on a concern with preventing others from spoiling their opportunities for rewards and avoiding unfair treatment for themselves. I had not predicted these responses before the study began. If the students in the constructivist classroom had similar negative thoughts about peers, they did not express them during the interviews or observations.

Although students placing pressure on peers to behave has a positive side, Cotton (2002) argued that negative thoughts towards others can lead to fighting and intimidation. Even though I did not observe students fighting or intimidating each other, based on their responses, I would be concerned that they might resort to such behaviors and that the feelings that cause aggressive behaviors could have a negative effect on the type of relationship the students have with the teacher. A larger and longer-term study of Assertive Discipline classrooms would need to be conducted in order to determine the

legitimacy of these concerns. The data in this study make one thing certain: at least during the observations, the students in this Assertive Discipline classroom did not have opportunities to discuss their feelings or learn alternative ways of handling negative feelings or conflicts, and none of these processes were mentioned during the interviews.

In contrast, the constructivist teacher led continuous discussions about not only behavior, but also feelings and consequences, perspective-taking, and the characteristics of a democratic environment. In order to promote this type of environment, he suggested to me that his behaviors were meant to be non-threatening to avoid dehumanizing students. He said, "I role-model the behaviors that my students need in their lives not only to be used inside the classroom but also outside of the classroom. I treat them like I like to be treated." His low-key, calm manner of speaking was touched with humor. For example, when a problem in the classroom surfaced, the teacher calmly stopped the classroom activity, asked the students "what level of cooperation are we working at?" waited for a response, and then said "skidaddle." He did not raise his voice at any time during the observation.

Throughout the course of the study, the students also handled themselves with a calm demeanor, and their comments demonstrated that they empathize with fellow students when they get into trouble. As data in Chapter 4 shows, when the students had a problem with another student, they would calmly ask that student to go to the Peace Chair with them and discuss their problem as the teacher did. They did not raise their voices. In our conversation, the teacher specifically mentioned that he considers students calling someone a name and getting involved in something that is not their business to be inappropriate behaviors. Consistent with his belief, he modeled how to protect the

students' dignity and how to handle different situations by continually reminding students what their Level of Cooperation was and asking if they needed to use the Peace Chair. Another example of students using behavior modeled by their teacher was their expressions of sympathy when someone else got into trouble, and their attempts to avoid making others feel worse by staring at them, laughing at them, or thinking that they're "dumb or something 'cause they just got in trouble." The teacher believed in protecting the dignity of the students and not embarrassing them. He said that he believed "the teacher is a leader and needs to model through his/her own behavior how to handle different situations."

In spite of the constructivist teacher's efforts, his concern for interpersonal relationships among his students didn't prevent all disagreements among students. When disagreements occurred, Mr. Hutton appeared to be using them as learning opportunities. Because his goal was self-regulation, he used these opportunities to help students ponder reasons for why disagreements happen, to struggle with possible solutions, and to help them develop an understanding of how others feel and why they behave the way they do. Therefore, disagreements also served as an opportunity to help students develop interpersonal understanding.

An example of a disagreement among students was a situation that occurred during the observation. Two students refused to use the I-message and the Peace Chair in solving their problems and when they did try, they did not follow through with the negotiated solutions. Mr. Hutton said that when strategies like the Peace Chair and I-messages did not work for some students, as occurred with the two students in his classroom during the observation, he would speak to the students individually about their

behavior, give them an opportunity to change their behavior, and if they did not, then they would have a conference with the students' parents.

Both groups of students' observations of their teachers seemed to affect their thoughts about not just their own behavior, but also their peers' behavior. Students adjusted their behavior according to how their teacher responded to the behaviors of others. This point has been supported in research such as Bandura and Cervone (1983), Canter and Canter (1983), and Weinstein et al. (1987). Dewey (1916/1966), said,

Everything the teacher does, as well as the manner in which they do it, incites the students to respond in some way or other, and each response tends to set the student's attitude in some way or other. (p. 59).

What is most important, but beyond the scope of this study, is the long-term impact of the teacher's influence on students' relationships with peers.

The study is limited to demonstrating that both teachers modeled expected behaviors for their students and developed rules and consequences to reinforce those expectations, and that the teachers modeled behaviors they both appeared to sincerely believe would make students successful in their classrooms. One teacher placed greater emphasis on academic success, and the other on success in interacting with peers and dealing with conflict. Although students made a few references to their lives outside of school, what is not known is the role their parents are playing in shaping students' behaviors in both areas and the degree to which this study supports assertions that children's future actions are modeled after the teachers in their lives.

Students' Views of Their Teacher's Classroom Management Strategies

Sometimes Differ from their Teacher's

An additional theme that evolved from this study was the difference between teachers' views about particular classroom management strategies and students' views of those strategies and how the teachers and students looked at similar situations but did not see them the same way. Two examples were found in the Assertive Discipline classroom and one in the constructivist classroom. All of these examples relate to fairness.

The teacher and students in the Assertive Discipline classroom viewed ignoring misbehavior, inconsistency in following through with consequences, and punishing the whole class for one or two students' misbehavior differently. First, the students felt that it was unfair when their teacher would ignore an inappropriate behavior. They felt the teacher should address all the inappropriate behaviors because otherwise, the students said, "the student will think it's ok and keep doing it." However, the teacher felt that some inappropriate behaviors would eventually become extinguished if they were not reinforced. Therefore, she felt that she should "ignore some behavior if it's not a huge problem. Chances are it will go away."

Second, the teacher believed that it is important to be consistent and felt that her rules were fair and consistent. However, based on what the students said, their teacher displayed inconsistency from their point of view when she did not follow through with rules every time a rule was broken. According to Dubelle (1995) and Duke's (1979) theoretical work, when the teacher is inconsistent in setting or enforcing behavioral guidelines, students may respond to the teacher with negative behaviors.

Students offered examples of their teacher's behavior that they said they agreed with,

but nevertheless felt were not fair. For example, when all the students handed their paper in on time or got all the answers right the first time, all the students received a reward. However, if one student was late in handing in a paper or missed an answer, no one received a reward. Students said, “We don’t get a second chance. Even though it’s not fair to everybody in the class, it will help the class not do it anymore.” These examples imply to me that these students’ definition of “fair” was knowing what they had to do to prevent negative consequences and that the Assertive Discipline teacher was successful in securing her students’ obedience regardless of whether or not the students viewed her approaches “fair” or “not fair.”

The teacher implemented approaches she felt were fair and ones that aligned with her goal of classroom management. Fairness, as viewed by the Assertive Discipline students, meant knowing what they had to do to prevent negative consequences, whereas fairness as viewed by the constructivist students was making decisions together during content learning or when a conflict arises

Students’ views of specific approaches in the constructivist classroom were positive overall. However, one difference was found between a view held by the teacher and the students’ view of the same management approach: students having to use money to go to the bathroom. As previously mentioned, students did not like having to use the “Hutton money,” or as some students referred to it, paying to go to the bathroom. Students wanted to save their money for Store Day, which meant having to budget accordingly. Even though some students viewed paying to go the bathroom as necessary because “kids are always leaving the classroom to avoid work,” others viewed it as unnecessary because going to the bathroom was “important and we shouldn’t have to pay for something like

that.” However, the teacher viewed it as an opportunity to teach students math concepts and not as an approach whereby students were denied bathroom privileges.

Based on the students’ responses, several conclusions and questions emerged: first, it is clear that students need bathroom breaks and that some feel punished for having to pay for taking a necessary break; second, if some students are using bathroom visits to avoid work, what does this say about these students’ personal responsibility for attending to academic learning?; and third, because paying to go to the bathroom denies them the money they would otherwise use during Store Day, do they avoid going to the bathroom for fear that they will not have enough money to buy what they want? Even though this approach may be an authentic attempt to teach math skills, it does not seem compatible with constructivist practices (see DeVries & Zan, 1994) in that it prevents students from getting a personal need met and in a sense rewards students who do not go to the bathroom and punishes those who do. I would suggest that a different approach for teaching students math concepts may therefore be more appropriate for a constructivist classroom than connecting the concepts to a necessary body function that needs immediate attention.

Implications

Because the concern about student misbehavior is so great in American schools, perhaps students’ views about teachers’ behaviors and how and why they develop self-control may shed some light on what outcomes we want our students to exhibit and the process by which those outcomes can be achieved. This is a difficult task, but our students can help in that endeavor if educators listen to them.

The rules and consequences developed by the teachers were taught so that students had a clear understanding of what was expected of them. However, I believe that without the teaching and modeling of techniques for developing self-regulation, understanding the perspectives of others, and for resolving conflicts with others, relationships at all levels may suffer and students' ability to develop self-control may be severely limited. The Assertive Discipline students' definition of self-control as following the rules of an adult and their more aggressive reactions to peers who were not in control of their own behavior serve as evidence for the conclusion that the Assertive Discipline students seem to feel somewhat powerless in their environment.

DeVries and Zan (1994) and Piaget (1932/1997) stated that when students view themselves as having little to no control over their lives in the classroom and, further, have little to no input into how their classroom is structured, they will learn to let others control them and allow this throughout their lives. Alternatively, they may choose to rebel in hopes of finding ways to feel a sense of control. This may be one reason why schools are dealing with so many inappropriate student behaviors. I could not observe the Assertive Discipline students outside the classroom or in their future lives as they mature, but the study does support the idea that these are important concerns that should be investigated in future research.

Overall, the constructivist students' responses indicated that they are able to make evaluations about the causes and effects of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors when provided the opportunities to do so, and having had "teachers who have different rules" should at least help them weigh their views and behaviors when encountering situations different from what they are used to. What is unknown is whether or not these students will continue to use the strategies learned in third grade for self-control if their teacher(s)

in other classes do not provide similar opportunities for them to resolve conflicts. How will they handle their conflicts then? It appears that more data related to the long-term effectiveness of constructivist classroom management training is also needed to draw any additional fair conclusions.

Although many questions remain, this study has lead me to conclude that means for learning self-control are largely determined by teachers: teachers' behaviors define how students are to behave in specific classroom situations, and teacher behaviors influence the degree to which students will develop self-control.

Recommendations for Teachers

As a result of this research, the following recommendations could provide teachers further insight into how to reduce student misbehavior in schools. Teachers should

1. Examine their own classroom management goals to decide whether or not these goals provide students opportunities to learn self-control and develop positive peer relationships. If teachers view learning self-control as developing student capabilities beyond obedience, such as promoting respect for all members of the classroom and understanding others' perspectives, then the constructivist approach appears most likely to make that possible.
2. Seek to understand how student views about the importance of their academic work and whether or not they feel empowered to get their needs met. This would provide the teacher with valuable information about the value students' put on their academic work and if they are limited in any way because of the rules teachers have implemented in their classrooms to keep students on task.
4. Explore students' views about the strategies used by the teacher and whether or not the students view those strategies as consistent and fair or unfair. Because the students in

this study viewed fairness as important, exploring these views may help to reduce negative views about their teachers and peers.

Reducing misbehavior in schools is difficult. Students said that they wanted their teachers to care about them, wanted to be responsible for their own behavior, and wanted to be treated with respect. These are important wants, and ones educators should take into consideration because it may help them as they choose a classroom management approach that will reduce misbehavior in their school. Each of the two classroom management approaches offers teachers a systematic plan for dealing with student behavior. However, the evidence points to the importance of teachers carefully considering the balance of academic and interpersonal classroom factors and how one may influence the other.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research is needed to better understand the effects both classroom management approaches have on student development of self-control as students mature. Research is also necessary to investigate the impact these approaches have on students' views of their academic learning to determine whether they correlate with positive or negative self-beliefs about their capacities to learn. Bandura (1986) suggested that students' views must be checked periodically to assess the effect of students' experiences on their perceived ability to perform, and whether placing relationship building at the forefront of students' learning and development may teach students to place less value on academic achievement or may in any way detract from academic learning and skill building.

Additional research is needed to explore what impact classroom management approaches and teachers' behaviors have on student/student and student/teacher relationships. This may be helpful information in which to determine the ramifications of the relationship.

Finally, further research is needed to better understand gender variables that may contribute to students' views within both classrooms and how both management approaches impact students' views depending on those variables (Weinstein, 1983).

Conclusion

Although the theoretical implications of Assertive Discipline and constructivist classrooms are different, this investigation of the two classroom management approaches has shown that students' views in both classrooms are significant in how they react to conflict situations, and exercise control over events that affect their lives.

This study was not an attempt to solve the debate about which approach is superior, the Assertive Discipline or the constructivist approach. Rather, the purpose of this study was to understand students' thinking about their teachers' classroom management strategies. The strategies their teachers' used influenced students and their beliefs about their teachers' and peers' behaviors. In both classrooms, the students emulated their teachers' behaviors and tone of voice, built relationships as modeled by their teacher, and expressed their belief that their teacher's approach was the best one.

The classroom observations from the constructivist classroom suggested that responsible use of freedom to self-regulate comes from students realizing that their input is respected (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999), which helps them to understand the views of others (DeVries & Zan, 1994). I believe that the result of the type of freedom offered in the constructivist classroom is that students will make value judgments about their own

behavior and what it means to be responsible to regulate their own behavior. Based on the findings of this study and the review of previous research, it is clear to me that classroom management approaches and teachers' behaviors influence each other to help students define and develop self-regulation. Because of these findings, I strongly support the constructivist approach. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized to all Assertive Discipline or constructivist classrooms, each teacher must decide whether he or she wants the type of student behavior outcomes found in the Assertive Discipline classroom or the ones found in the constructivist classroom.

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APPENDIX A
STUDENT PERMISSION FORM

Student Permission Form

I _____, have been told that my mom, dad, or the person who takes care of me has said that it is okay for me to take part in an activity where I will be videotaped and audio taped so that I can talk about my feelings about the rules in the classroom, consequences for not following the rules, and feelings about my teacher.

I am doing this because I want to. I have been told that I can stop my part in the activity at any time. If I ask to stop or decide that I don't want to do this activity at all, nothing bad will happen to me.

Name

Date

APPENDIX B**TEACHER PERMISSION FORM**

**(UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA HUMAN
PARTICIPANTS REVIEW INFORMED CONSENT)**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW
INFORMED CONSENT**

You have been invited to participate in a voluntary research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

The nature and purpose of this study is to investigate third grade students' perceptions of their teachers' behavior management strategies. It is hoped that these perceptions will reveal environmental factors that influence students' awareness of classroom management strategies within a constructivist classroom.

Teachers who participate will be audiotaped and videotaped in the classroom. Each teacher will be interviewed before being videotaped and will wear a wireless microphone during their interview. Teacher interviews will take approximately two hours. Interview questions include their perceptions of rules in the classroom, consequences for inappropriate behaviors, perceptions of their own behavior as it relates to classroom management, strategies used for instructional purposes, and opportunities for students to develop and show self-control.

Risks & Confidentiality:

Risks to participation are minimal. The primary risk would be from a breach of confidentiality. However, information obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential. Teachers will not have access to student responses and students will not be provided with teacher responses. Only the interviewer and researcher will know what each participant has said. The information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference.

Teacher's Right to Refuse or Withdraw:

I _____ have been told that my participation is completely voluntary. I am free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and that by doing so I will not be penalized or lose benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

Questions:

I have been told that the investigators will answer any questions about my participation. I have also been advised that if I desire information in the future regarding participation or the study generally, I can contact Joan Gerbo at 641-753-8213, or mgerbo@unhi.edu. I can also contact the office of the Human Participants Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-2748, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.

Agreement:

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project.

(Signature of Teacher)

Date

(Printed name of Teacher)

Date

(Signature of Researcher)

Date

(Printed name of Researcher)

Date

APPENDIX C
PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM
(UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW
INFORMED CONSENT)

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW
INFORMED CONSENT**

Please return this consent form to the classroom by _____. Thank-you.

Your child has been invited to participate in a voluntary research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to allow your child to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

The nature and purpose of this study is to investigate third grade students' perceptions of their teachers' behavior management strategies. It is hoped that these perceptions will reveal environmental factors that influence students' awareness of classroom management strategies within a constructivist classroom.

Students who have permission from their parents will be videotaped in the classroom and interviewed by audiotape outside the classroom in the school setting. Each student will wear a wireless microphone during their interview. Interview questions include their perceptions of rules in the classroom, consequences for inappropriate behaviors, ability to develop and show self-control, perceptions of their teacher's behavior related to classroom management, and strategies used for instructional purposes. Those who participate in the study will miss approximately 30-35 minutes of class content.

Risks & Confidentiality:

Risks to participation are minimal. The primary risk would be from a breach of confidentiality. However, information obtained during this study which could identify your child will be kept strictly confidential. Teachers will not have access to student responses and students will not be provided with teacher responses. Only the interviewer and researcher will know what each participant has said. The information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference.

Parent and Child's Right to Refuse or Withdraw:

I _____ have been told that my child's participation is completely voluntary. He/She is free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and that by doing so he/she will not be penalized or lose benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled.

Questions:

I have been told that the investigators will answer any questions about my child's participation. I have also been advised that if I desire information in the future regarding participation or the study generally, I can contact Joan Gerbo at 641-753-8213 or mgerbo@unhcsu.com. I can also contact the office of the Human Participants Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-2748, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.

Agreement:

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my child's participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this project.

(Signature of parent/legal guardian)

Date

(Printed name of parent/legal guardian)

Date

(Printed name of child participant)

Date

(Signature and printed name of Researcher) Date

APPENDIX D
OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT
OF ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Observation of Assertive Discipline Learning Environment

Instructions: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

- 1-no evidence
- 2-little evidence
- 3-Some evidence
- 4-considerable evidence
- 5-extensive evidence

I. Creating the classroom discipline plan

Rules

- ☐ 1. Rules apply only to behavior and do not address academic issues.
- ☐ 2. Rules tell student what behaviors are expected
- ☐ 3. There are a limited number of classroom rules.
- ☐ 4. Rules apply no matter what activity is taking place.
- ☐ 5. Rule making involves student input

Comments:

Positive recognition in the form of supportive feedback

- ☐ 6. Verbal recognition, positive notes and phone calls are used as forms of supportive feedback
- ☐ 7. Verbal recognition is used for students who are following the rules
- ☐ 8. Encourages a 12-inch voice
- ☐ 9. Uses verbal recognition to encourage students to continue appropriate behavior
- ☐ 10. Uses verbal recognition to increase students' self-esteem
- ☐ 11. Uses verbal recognition to reduce behavioral problems
- ☐ 12. Sets goals to make a specific number of positive phone calls to parents each week
- ☐ 13. Uses supportive feedback to encourage students to behave appropriately.
- ☐ 14. Creates a positive environment by using consistent supportive feedback
- ☐ 15. Teaches appropriate behavior by using consistent supportive feedback
- ☐ 16. Establishes positive relationships with students by using consistent supportive feedback
- ☐ 17. Recognizes student achievements
- ☐ 18. Addresses student concerns outside of the classroom

Comments:

By Joan Gerbo, 2002

Creating the classroom discipline plan continued

Instructions: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

- 1-no evidence
- 2-little evidence
- 3-Some evidence
- 4-considerable evidence
- 5-extensive evidence

Rewards

- ___ 19. Recognizes students' responsible behaviors with rewards
- ___ 20. Rewards are given immediately after a desired behavior is observed
- ___ 21. Motivates students through special privileges
- ___ 22. Uses a bulletin board to keep track of points needed to reach a class reward
- ___ 23. Uses a scoreboard to keep track of points needed to reach a class reward
- ___ 24. Reinforces positive behavior by uses the marbles in a jar technique

Comments:

Consequences: Corrective Actions

- ___ 25. Presents a discipline hierarchy which lists corrective actions in the order they will be imposed for disruptive behavior
 - Example:
 - First time a student breaks a rule: reminder
 - Second time: 5 minutes working away from the group
 - Third time: 10 minutes working away from the group
 - Fourth time: Call parents
 - Fifth time: Send to principal
 - Severe clause: Send to principal
- ___ 26. Discusses what appropriate behaviors are and consequences for inappropriate Behaviors
- ___ 27. Encourages students to take responsibility for their own behaviors
- ___ 28. Expects students to write why they chose to break a rule or not follow the direction
- ___ 29. Expects student to write an alternative action the student could have taken that would have been more appropriate
- ___ 30. Deals with disruptive behaviors calmly, quickly, and consistently
- ___ 31. Uses corrective actions students do not like (being last in line, getting a time-out)
- ___ 32. Provides actions that do not embarrass or humiliate a student
- ___ 33. Provides actions that do not include corporal punishment
- ___ 34. Writes names on the board, a clipboard, or in a record book with students disobey the rules

Comments:

By Joan Gerbo, 2002

Creating the classroom discipline plan continued

Instructions: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

- 1-no evidence
- 2-little evidence
- 3-Some evidence
- 4-considerable evidence
- 5-extensive evidence

Implements corrective actions

- ___ 35. Uses corrective action every time a student acts up
- ___ 36. Refocuses students who attempt to argue with you
- ___ 37. Takes the first opportunity to recognize something positive the student is doing after they have received a corrective action
- ___ 38. Provides an escape mechanism for students who are upset and want to talk about what happened
- ___ 39. Moves close to a student who is continually disruptive

Comments:

II. Teaching Responsible Behavior

- ___ 1. Identifies instructional settings, routine procedures, and special policies for which specific directions are needed.
- ___ 2. Determines the specific directions you want students to follow for each activity and procedure you have identified.
- ___ 3. Blends academics and behavior management efforts into a cohesive whole
- ___ 4. Integrates behavior management into all interactions with students
- ___ 5. Posts visual clues around the classroom to help remind students of appropriate behavior during different activities and procedures.
- ___ 6. Posts discipline plan in a prominent spot in the classroom.

Comments:

By Joan Gerbo, 2002

Instructions: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

- 1-no evidence
- 2-little evidence
- 3-Some evidence
- 4-considerable evidence
- 5-extensive evidence

III. Building Positive Relationships

- ☐ 1. Learns about the student's personal life
- ☐ 2. Uses a student inventory throughout the year
- ☐ 3. Gives one-on-one attention with students at recess, lunch, before or after class.
- ☐ 4. Attends school activities to see students perform
- ☐ 5. Shows students that you care about them as unique individuals despite their behavior problems
- ☐ 6. Establishes positive relationships with the most difficult students
- ☐ 7. Institutes an in-school suspension program for extremely disruptive students
- ☐ 8. Calls students at home after a difficult day
- ☐ 9. Makes positive phone calls to parents
- ☐ 10. Establishes positive relationships with parents before problems arise
- ☐ 11. Asks parents to visit the classroom
- ☐ 12. Asks for administrator involvement when counseling with parents or students about problem behaviors

Comments:

By Joan Gerbo, 2002

Canter, L., & Canter, M. (3rd ed.). (1992). *Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline: Positive behavior management for today's classroom*. Los Angeles, CA: Canter & Associates.

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

OF CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

I. Are children actively engaged in exploration and participation?

Do teaching practices encourage and support active exploration and participation?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 1. Encourages and supports children in learning through play
- ___ 2. Provides firsthand experiences (e.g., going on field trips, caring for animals, cooking)
- ___ 3. Encourages exploring objects (e.g., comparing a variety of surface textures)
- ___ 4. Encourages testing actions on objects
- ___ 5. Uses humor to motivate children's participation (e.g., unraveling a funny riddle)
- ___ 6. Recognizes and accepts children's attempts and approximations
- ___ 7. Draws attention to and/or labels children's errors
- ___ 8. Interrupts or intervenes in children's learning and interactions
- ___ 9. Moves through the classroom, facilitating children's active engagement in learning
- ___ 10. Recognizes and takes advantage of the teachable moment (e.g., brings a book to a child to support his or her inquiry)
- ___ 11. Encourages dramatic play as a way of mediating understanding
- ___ 12. Encourages children's experimentation with various forms of music, art, and/or movement
- ___ 13. Supports children's experimentation with writing
- ___ 14. Directs children's attention to isolated skill lesson(s) (e.g., tells children to copy words from the blackboard)
- ___ 15. Sits or stands in one place and requires children to come to him or her
- ___ 16. Other:

Do questioning practices encourage and support active exploration and participation?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 17. Encourages children to make predictions, test hypotheses, and evaluate their predictions
Encourages children to pose their own questions and problems

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

- ___ 19. Supports children's attempts to find their own answers and conclusions (e.g., responds to children's questions by helping them decide how to investigate further)
- ___ 20. Asks open-ended questions to facilitate children's involvement and understanding
- ___ 21. Accepts that there is often more than one right answer
- ___ 22. Provides time for children to respond to questions
- ___ 23. Identifies problems for children to solve
- ___ 24. Offers yes-no responses to children's questions
- ___ 25. Ignores children's questions
- ___ 26. Asks questions requiring a single word response
- ___ 27. Asks cued questions (e.g., literal, recall, or scripted)
- ___ 28. Other:

Do scheduling practices support active exploration and participation?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 29. Provides uninterrupted periods of time that allow children to select, explore, engage in, and persist at experiences
- ___ 30. Accommodates spontaneous opportunities for learning in the daily schedule

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 31. Encourages children to initiate meaningful experiences when they are not assigned an activity
- ___ 32. Schedules class time by content areas (e.g., reading, writing, math, science, and social studies)
- ___ 33. Schedules class time in short blocks of time
- ___ 34. Expects children to wait for directions for next task after completing present task
- ___ 35. Expects children to sit quietly until they receive permission to move
- ___ 36. Allocates time for outdoor experiences
- ___ 37. Allocates time for physically active experiences
- ___ 38. Other:

II. Are children engaged in meaningful and purposeful learning?

Do teaching practices encourage and support meaningful and purposeful learning?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 39. Uses thematic inquiry to integrate learning
- ___ 40. Supports each child in learning about his or her own research questions (e.g., projects or discussion)
- ___ 41. Uses children's curiosity and desire to make sense of their worlds to motivate their learning
- ___ 42. Writes down and reads back children's ideas
- ___ 43. Encourages and supports children's attempts at their own writing (e.g., encourages daily journal writing and children writing their own books)
- ___ 44. Provides functional contexts for reading (e.g., labels)
- ___ 45. Provides functional contexts for writing (e.g., daily messages)
- ___ 46. Provides opportunities to develop number concepts through everyday experiences (e.g., graphing classmates' heights, lunch count)
- ___ 47. Provides opportunities for children to transact with whole books
- ___ 48. Encourages children to use picture cues while reading

EXPLANATIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

- ___ 49. Invites children to write about what they are reading
- ___ 50. Encourages children to express what they are reading about through music, art, or movement
- ___ 51. Supports children throughout the writing process (e.g., collecting, drafting, revising, and editing)
- ___ 52. Discusses the relationship of events, characters, themes, or topics in text to children's lives
- ___ 53. Follows the curriculum suggested by a published program when providing instruction (e.g., basal reading, handwriting, spelling, or math series)
- ___ 54. Uses work sheets to teach children skills (e.g., tracing numbers and letters and matching objects)
- ___ 55. Uses reading materials containing controlled vocabulary
- ___ 56. Uses manipulatives to develop mathematical understanding (e.g., ordering objects or estimating quantities)
- ___ 57. Presents mathematical concepts using worksheets and abstract representations
- ___ 58. Directs children to produce patterned projects (e.g., apples, Piñata hats)
- ___ 59. Provides repetitive exercises promoting rote memorization (e.g., copying the alphabet or using flashcards)
- ___ 60. Focuses instruction on a different letter each week
- ___ 61. Provides activities in which children are directed to listen to differences and similarities in consonants, vowels, and words
- ___ 62. Encourages children to sound out unknown words
- ___ 63. Provides activities in which children attend to visual differences and similarities in letter combinations
- ___ 64. Presents sight words (i.e., uses charts, lists, or flashcards to teach vocabulary)
- ___ 65. Other:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

Does the teacher demonstrate in his or her own learning experiences as meaningful and purposeful learning?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 66. Reads to children
- ___ 67. Reads for personal enjoyment
- ___ 68. Responds to texts (e.g., laughs at a funny twist of plot in a book)
- ___ 69. Shares his or her own thinking processes while reading
- ___ 70. Writes for real purposes (e.g., written conversation, language experience, messages, letters, directions)
- ___ 71. Writes for personal enjoyment (e.g., writes own journal reflections while children are writing in their journals)
- ___ 72. Talks about conventions of print in context
- ___ 73. Shares his or her own thinking processes while solving a problem
- ___ 74. Shares personal interests and information with children (e.g., talks about trips, shares own shell collection)
- ___ 75. Shares his or her own inquiry
- ___ 76. Uses various forms of music, art, and movement to express self (e.g., writes and sings an original song, paints a picture)
- ___ 77. Other:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

III. Are children encouraged to develop autonomy?

Do teaching practices encourage and support the development of autonomy in children?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 78. Provides learning opportunities relevant to each child's needs
- ___ 79. Supports each child in learning about his or her interests
- ___ 80. Provides ways for children to celebrate their experiences (e.g., author's chair, verbal recognition, notes)
- ___ 81. Allows children to choose from a variety of hands-on materials to explore on their own
- ___ 82. Provides opportunities for children to relate what they are learning to their previous experiences
- ___ 83. Provides opportunities for children to make connections to their lives outside of class
- ___ 84. Provides the same skill lesson(s) to the whole class at the same time
- ___ 85. Demonstrates flexibility in grouping children based on their needs and interests
- ___ 86. Assigns children to homogeneous groups based on ability for instructional purposes
- ___ 87. Encourages children to construct their own rules and values
- ___ 88. Allows children to experience natural consequences
- ___ 89. Encourages children to make choices (e.g., themes, topics, books)
- ___ 90. Gives children primary responsibility for the care and storage of materials, supplies, and equipment
- ___ 91. Expects children to follow rules she or he has established (e.g., raising hand before speaking, staying in seats, walking in a straight line)
- ___ 92. Uses a behavior modification system to instill discipline (e.g., practices assertive discipline techniques like writing children's names on board, placing checks next to children's names, and insisting that children lay their heads on their desks)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

5
Extensive
Evidence

- ___ 93. Resolves conflicts with adult-imposed consequences
- ___ 94. Uses dominating, rejecting, or threatening language to maintain behavior
- ___ 95. Provides external rewards (e.g., stickers, candy, and free time) for expected behavior
- ___ 96. Selects and distributes supplies, materials, and equipment, and other tangible features of the classroom on a daily basis
- ___ 97. Allows children to choose daily housekeeping tasks in the classroom
- ___ 98. Other:

Do scheduling practices encourage autonomy?

- ___ 99. The daily schedule is sensitive to children's needs
- ___ 100. The teacher and children discuss and negotiate the schedule
- ___ 101. Children use a sign-up system to indicate their choices
- ___ 102. The daily schedule is organized to allow time for children to plan and implement
- ___ 103. Routines are used to help children move from dependence on others toward independence
- ___ 104. Smooth transitions occur between activities (e.g., children have ample time for cleanup and for organizing their departure)
- ___ 105. Children record and evaluate their completed experiences
- ___ 106. The teacher controls the schedule
- ___ 107. The teacher controls the pace for instruction and task completion
- ___ 108. Other:

EXPLANATIONS

IV. Are children encouraged to interact with others?

Do teaching practices encourage and support the social development of children?

EXPLANATIONS:

- ___ 109. Provides opportunities for children to learn from their interactions with others

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1
No
Evidence

2
Little
Evidence

3
Some
Evidence

4
Considerable
Evidence

Extensive
Evidence

- ___ 110. Encourages children to be empathetic and responsive to others' feelings and needs
- ___ 111. Facilitates the development of social skills to solve problems (e.g., cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with other(s))
- ___ 112. Encourages children to share materials and equipment
- ___ 113. Provides opportunities for children to work in small groups on projects that encourage collaboration and dialogue
- ___ 114. Provides opportunities for children to know each other personally
- ___ 115. Provides opportunities for children to present their learning to others
- ___ 116. Integrates appreciation of individual differences (e.g., cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, and physically challenged) throughout the daily lives of children
- ___ 117. Promotes competition among children (e.g., timed responses, games)
- ___ 118. Asks children to brainstorm what they know or care about an idea, theme, or concept to assist in planning learning experiences
- ___ 119. Invites children to participate in storytelling
- ___ 120. Supports experimentation with oral language (e.g., purpose, rhythm, voice)
- ___ 121. Encourages conversations, talking things over, and exchanging opinions
- ___ 122. Requires recitation (e.g., reciting poems, alphabet, days of the week)
- ___ 123. Discourages children from talking with one another
- ___ 124. Corrects children's oral errors
- ___ 125. Other:

Do scheduling practices encourage children to interact with others?

EXPLANATIONS

- ___ 126. The room is prepared before children arrive so that teachers are free to be with children
- ___ 127. Children have sufficient time to approach, investigate, and interact with others
- ___ 128. Time is scheduled for conferences with the teacher and/or other children

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

**1
No
Evidence**

**2
Little
Evidence**

**3
Some
Evidence**

**4
Considerable
Evidence**

**5
Extensive
Evidence**

- ___ 129. Time is scheduled for children to discuss what they are reading
- ___ 130. Time is allocated for one-on-one activities
- ___ 131. Time is allocated for small-group activities
- ___ 132. Time is allocated for large-group activities
- ___ 133. Other:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put the correct number in the corresponding blank line.

1

Yes

2

No

V. Does the learning environment support children's learning?

Does the learning environment encourage active exploration and participation?

EXPLANATIONS

- ☐ 134. Reading materials are displayed in an inviting manner
- ☐ 135. Materials can be used for a variety of learning experiences
- ☐ 136. Furnishings and arrangements encourage participation
- ☐ 137. The room's furniture and learning areas are arranged so that children can freely interact with one another
- ☐ 138. The teacher assigns children seats
- ☐ 139. Children have easy access to teachers
- ☐ 140. Other:

Does the learning environment support meaningful and purposeful learning?

EXPLANATIONS

- ☐ 141. Shelves, containers, and supplies are labeled with symbols, pictures, and words
- ☐ 142. Children have access to real objects, living things, and literacy props
- ☐ 143. Charts of letter families (e.g., rhyming words like *at, bat, and cat*) are displayed
- ☐ 144. Flash cards are available to promote the rote memorization of letters, words, and math facts
- ☐ 145. Other:

Does the learning environment support the development of autonomy?

EXPLANATIONS

- ☐ 146. Children have routines (e.g., hand washing) that keep them healthy and safe

- ___ 147. Children have an easily accessible place to store their personal belongings
- ___ 148. The teacher controls the arrangement and organization of the classroom (e.g., bulletin boards, seating arrangements)
- ___ 149. Materials, supplies, and equipment used on a daily basis are easily accessible to all children
- ___ 150. Children have many opportunities to display their work
- ___ 151. Materials displayed on classroom walls are prepared by the teacher or commercial publishers
- ___ 152. Children participate in constructing the learning environment
- ___ 153. Children make changes in the learning environment to meet their learning needs
- ___ 154. Learning centers are identified .
- ___ 155. Materials, supplies, and equipment support a variety of children's individual abilities and interests
- ___ 156. Other:

INSTRUCTIONS: To be completed with the assistance of the teacher.
Please put the correct number in the corresponding line.

1
Not
Available

2
Available, But Not
In Sufficient Quantities

3
Available in
Sufficient Quantities

VI. Are the developmental abilities and changing interests of children encouraged by clearly defined learning areas?

Art

- ___ 157. Easels
 ___ 160. Crayons
 ___ 163. Scissors
 ___ 166. Fabric scraps
 ___ 169. Play dough
 ___ 172. Recycled materials

- ___ 158. Brushes of varying sizes
 ___ 161. Markers
 ___ 164. Paste
 ___ 167. Yarn
 ___ 170. Pipe cleaners

- ___ 159. Paint
 ___ 162. Clay
 ___ 165. A variety of paper
 ___ 168. Craft sticks
 ___ 171. Other:

EXAMPLES:

Construction

- ___ 173. Legos
 ___ 176. Transport toys (e.g., trucks, shopping carts, wagons)
 ___ 180. Other:

- ___ 174. Blocks
 ___ 177. Tinkertoys
 ___ 178. Lincoln Logs

- ___ 175. Woodworking supplies (e.g., hammers, screwdrivers)
 ___ 179. Materials for recording structures (e.g., cameras, paper)

EXAMPLES:

Manipulatives

- ___ 181. Magnetic boards
 ___ 184. Puzzles
 ___ 187. Unifix cubes
 ___ 190. Objects that can be used for sorting and seeing patterns and relationships (e.g., buttons, beans, keys, beads)

- ___ 182. Measuring containers
 ___ 185. Sewing cards
 ___ 188. Games (e.g., playing cards, board games)

- ___ 183. Buckets
 ___ 186. Pattern blocks
 ___ 189. Other:

EXAMPLES:

Pretend Play

- ___ 191. Kitchen equipment
 ___ 194. Props
 ___ 197. Telephones

- ___ 192. Dolls
 ___ 195. Puppets
 ___ 198. Other:

- ___ 193. Apparel (e.g., clothes, costume)
 ___ 196. Puppet stage

EXAMPLES:

INSTRUCTIONS: To be completed with the assistance of the teacher.
Please put the correct number in the corresponding line.

1
Not
Available

2
Available, But Not
in Sufficient Quantities

3
Available in
Sufficient Quantities

Music

- ____ 199. Tape recorder
____ 202. Tapes, records, or CD's

- ____ 200. Record or CD player
____ 203. Music books

- ____ 201. Musical instruments
____ 204. Other:

EXAMPLES:

Communications

- ____ 205. Highly predictable books
____ 208. Picture books
____ 209. Wordless books
____ 211. Big books
____ 213. Child-made books
____ 216. Magazines (e.g., Ranger Rick,
Backyard)
____ 220. Newspapers
____ 222. Environmental print (e.g.,
signs, posters, labels)
____ 226. Other:

- ____ 206. Books represent a range
of reading ability
____ 210. Books represent a variety
of topics
____ 214. Books represent a variety
of cultural backgrounds
____ 218. Books are on audiotape,
cassette, or film
____ 223. Text sets (categorized
according to themes)
____ 227. Reference materials
(e.g., dictionaries)

- ____ 207. Bookmaking supplies (e.g.,
binders, rings, string,
stapler, hole puncher)
____ 212. Writing instruments
____ 215. Rubber stamps
____ 217. Variety of paper
____ 219. Envelopes
____ 221. Stencils
____ 224. Journals
____ 225. Easel and chart paper
____ 228. Mailbox or message board

EXAMPLES:

Science/Discovery

- ____ 229. Artifacts of nature (e.g., rocks,
sand, water, soil, leaves)
____ 233. Objects that can be taken apart
and reassembled or recombined
into new objects

- ____ 230. Science lab (e.g., microscope,
petri dishes, magnets, prisms,
magnifying glasses)
____ 234. Printed materials supporting
scientific literacy

- ____ 231. Sand and water table
____ 232. Measurement tools and
containers (e.g., rulers,
balancing scales)
____ 235. Other:

EXAMPLES:

INSTRUCTIONS: To be completed with the assistance of the teacher.
Please put the correct number in the corresponding line.

1
Not
Available

2
Available, But Not
in Sufficient Quantities

3
Available in
Sufficient Quantities

Computers

- ____ 236. Computers are accessible to children
 ____ 237. Children can readily access programs
 ____ 238. A printer is available

Please list available software:

Please characterize available software with a checkmark:

- ____ 239. Isolated skills focus
 ____ 240. Integrative focus
 ____ 241. Teacher-made
 ____ 242. Child-made

EXAMPLES:

Do materials, supplies, and equipment encourage the physical development of children?

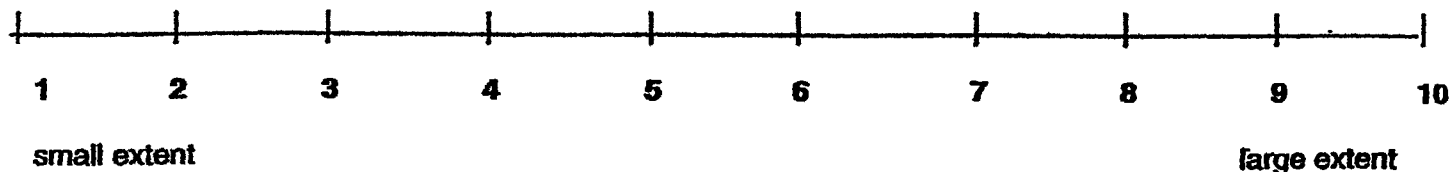
- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ____ 243. Balance beams | ____ 244. Tumbling mats | ____ 245. Steps |
| ____ 246. Tunnels | ____ 247. Ladders | ____ 248. Tubes |
| ____ 249. Hula hoops | ____ 250. Slides | ____ 251. Balls |
| ____ 252. Tires | ____ 253. Riding toys | ____ 254. Rugs or mats for resting |
| ____ 255. Other: | | |

EXAMPLES:

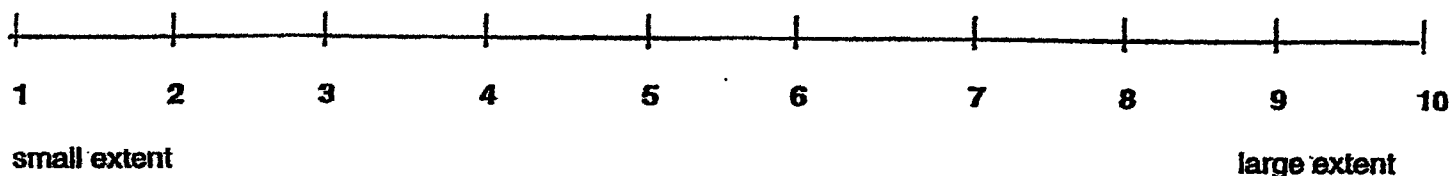
INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill in one circle for each of the following questions:

VII. Observer's Overview

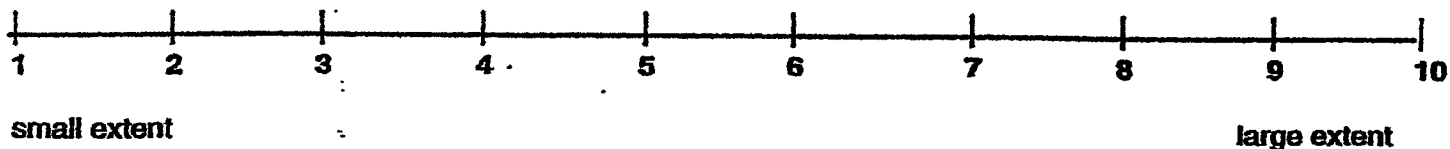
256. To what extent did you observe the teacher serving as the source of knowledge for children in this classroom?



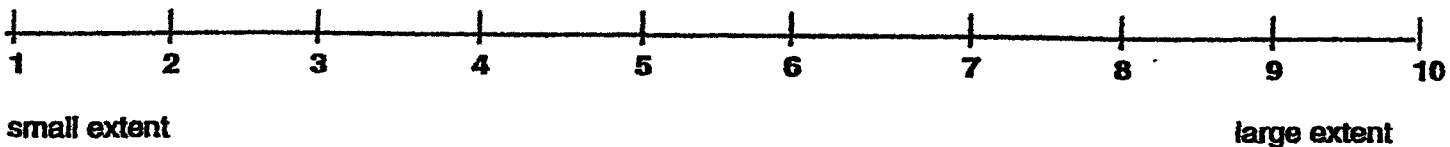
257. To what extent did you observe children constructing their own knowledge in this classroom?



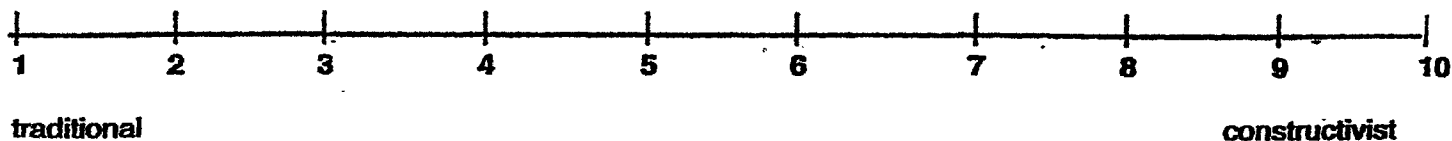
258. To what extent did you observe teacher-directed learning in this classroom?



259. To what extent did you observe child-directed learning in this classroom?



260. Where would you place this teacher on the following continuum?



APPENDIX G
TEACHER INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Guiding Questions for Teachers Classroom Management of Behaviors

Introduction:

I'm going to ask you several questions about the rules in your classroom. Please be as honest as you can. All your answers will be confidential. I am not going to share any of your answers with any other teacher, principal, or parents.

Our conversation will be tape-recorded to ensure accuracy. Please speak up so that I'll be able to hear everything you have said when I listen to our conversation later. Do you have any questions? Let's begin.

1. Philosophy of Classroom Management

What is your philosophy of effective classroom management?

2. Classroom Rules

How do you provide clear expectations to students?

Suggested probes if the following topics are not spontaneously covered.

- a) Tell me about the rules in your classroom.
- b) What are examples of appropriate students' behaviors?
- c) What are examples of inappropriate student behaviors?
- d) What methods and approaches do you use to promote appropriate student behavior?
- e) What methods and approaches do you use to prevent inappropriate behaviors?
- f) How are rules developed in the classroom?
- g) How are classroom rules implemented?

3. Classroom Consequences

How do you address students who do not conform to the expectations in your classroom?

Suggested probes if the following topics are not spontaneously covered

- a) What types of consequences do you use for inappropriate behaviors?
- b) What methods and approaches do you use when dealing with conflicts among students?

4. Self-Control

How do attitudes of self-control occur?

Suggested probes if the following topics are not spontaneously covered

- a) What does it mean when a student has self-control of their behaviors?
- b) How do students learn to control their own behaviors?
- c) What management strategies do you use to help students learn self-control of their own behavior?

4. Teachers' Behaviors

Please reflect on your classroom behaviors.

What do you do to maintain effective management?

Suggested probes if the following topics are not spontaneously covered

- a) What are examples of effective classroom behaviors you use when dealing with students?
- b) What are examples of less effective classroom behaviors you use when dealing with students?
- c) What are examples of non-verbal behaviors you use in the classroom to manage students' behaviors?
- d) What type of relationship do you feel you have with your students?

Thank-you for working with me today. We are all done.

APPENDIX F
STUDENT INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Guiding Questions for Students
Students' Perceptions of Classroom Management of Behaviors

Students' Perceptions of Classroom Rules

1. Tell me about the rules in your classroom.
 - a) *What are the rules in your classroom?*
 - b) *Why are there rules in your classroom?*
2. Who makes the rules in your classroom?
 - a) *Do students ever get to make the rules? If so, how do the students make rules in your classroom? (teacher-directed, student input)*
 - b) *How do you learn what the rules are in the classroom?*
 - c) *How do you learn to follow the rules if the teacher does not tell you?*
3. Does the teacher talk with students about what to do when there are problems in the classroom?
 - a) *What does your teacher say?*
4. Are the rules fair for everyone?
 - a) *What is an example of when they are fair?*
 - b) *When are the rules sometimes not fair?*
5. How would you like the rules in the classroom to be different?
 - a) *If you could change the rules, what rules would you change and what would you change them to?*

Students' Perceptions of Classroom Consequences

6. What does your teacher do when someone breaks a rule?
 - a) *Tell me what your teacher does when students are fighting or having an argument.*
7. Tell me what the best thing is to do when someone breaks a rule.
 - a) *Why is this the best thing to do?*

Students' Perceptions of Self-Control

8. What are examples of appropriate behaviors for students in the classroom?
9. What are examples of inappropriate behaviors for students in the classroom?
10. What does it mean when someone controls their behavior?
 - a) *How do you learn to control your behavior?*
11. What is the best thing for the teacher to do to help students control their behavior?
 - a) *Why is this the best thing to do?*
 - b) *How do you handle problems when the teacher is not able to help you?*
 - c) *Is this the best way handle problems?*

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Behaviors

12. What don't you like about your teacher?
13. What do you like about your teacher?
 - a) *How can you tell if your teacher likes you?*
 - b) *How can you tell if your teacher cares about other students?*

That is all the questions I have for you today. Thank-you for working with me.